



KING CHARLES I

# GREAT LIVES

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. SHAKESPEARE     | 39. SHELLEY               |
| 2. QUEEN VICTORIA  | 40. FARADAY               |
| 3. WAGNER          | 41. MOZART                |
| 4. JOHN WESLEY     | 42. HANDEL                |
| 5. JOSHUA REYNOLDS | 43. GARIBALDI             |
| 6. CECIL RHODES    | 44. COBDEN                |
| 7. GLADSTONE       | 45. GORDON                |
| 8. GEORGE ELIOT    | 46. DRAKE                 |
| 9. THE BRONTËS     | 47. TOLSTOY               |
| 10. CHARLES II     | 48. ABRAHAM LINCOLN       |
| 11. DICKENS        | 49. CAPTAIN COOK          |
| 12. BEETHOVEN      | 50. DOCTOR JOHNSON        |
| 13. H. M. STANLEY  | 51. WOLSEY                |
| 14. WILLIAM BLAKE  | 52. PRINCE CHARLES EDWARD |
| 15. SHERIDAN       | 53. PALMERSTON            |
| 16. ROBERT BURNS   | 54. THOMAS GRAY           |
| 17. EDWARD VII     | 55. WILLIAM PITT          |
| 18. THACKERAY      | 56. DE QUINCEY            |
| 19. NAPOLEON III   | 57. KEIR HARDIE           |
| 20. STRINDBERG     | 58. FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE  |
| 21. NELSON         | 59. KING JAMES I          |
| 22. CHOPIN         | 60. SPINOZA               |
| 23. NIETZSCHE      | 61. LIVINGSTONE           |
| 24. HAIG           | 62. ALFRED THE GREAT      |
| 25. BACH           | 63. WORDSWORTH            |
| 26. MILTON         | 64. RUSKIN                |
| 27. DARWIN         | 65. DISRAELI              |
| 28. BYRON          | 66. JOHN KNOX             |
| 29. VAN GOGH       | 67. WELLINGTON            |
| 30. JANE AUSTEN    | 68. CARDINAL MANNING      |
| 31. CHARLES LAMB   | 69. DOSTOEVSKY            |
| 32. KEATS          | 70. ASQUITH               |
| 33. WILLIAM MORRIS | 71. QUEEN ELIZABETH       |
| 34. HUXLEY         | 72. MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS   |
| 35. W. G. GRACE    | 73. CLIVE                 |
| 36. NEWMAN         | 74. ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI |
| 37. DUMAS PÈRE     | 75. PEEL                  |
| 38. CARLYLE        | 76. KING CHARLES I        |
|                    | 77. LISZT                 |

A complete list of the GREAT LIVES with the authors' names  
can be had on application.

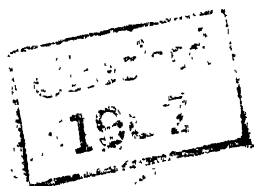
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# KING CHARLES I

*by* PANSY PAKENHAM

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Great Lives



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## CHRONOLOGY

- |       |            |  |
|-------|------------|--|
| 1600. | Nov. 19.   | Charles born at Dunfermline.                                   |
| 1603. | Mar. 24.   | James succeeds to English throne.                              |
| 1612. | Nov. 6.    | Charles becomes Prince of Wales on death of his brother Henry. |
| 1613/ | Feb. 14.   | Marriage of his sister Elizabeth to Elector Palatine.          |
| 1618. |            | Outbreak of Thirty Years War.                                  |
| 1623. | Mar.-Sept. | Charles and Buckingham in Madrid.                              |
| 1625. | Mar. 27.   | Death of James I. Succession of Charles.                       |
|       | June 12.   | Arrival of Henrietta Maria in England.                         |
|       | June 18.   | Parliament meets.  |
|       | Aug. 12.   | King dissolves Parliament.                                     |
|       | October.   | Expedition to Cadiz.   |
| 1626. | Feb. 6.    | Second Parliament meets.                                       |
|       | May 8.     | Buckingham impeached.  |
|       | June 15.   | King dissolves Parliament.                                     |
| 1627. | June-Nov.  | Buckingham in the Isle of Rhé.                                 |
| 1628. | Mar. 17.   | Third Parliament meets.  |
|       | June 7.    | King passes Petition of Right.                                 |
|       | June 26.   | King prorogues Parliament.                                     |
|       | Aug. 24.   | Buckingham murdered.   |

1629. Jan. 20. Third Parliament reassembles  
 Mar. 3. King dissolves Parliament.
1630. May 29. Birth of Charles II.
1632. Wentworth made Lord  
 Deputy of Ireland.
1633. June 18. King crowned at Edinburgh.
1636. Aug. 6. Laud made Archbishop of  
 Canterbury.
- 1636-7. Hampden ship-money case.
1637. Aug. Riots in Edinburgh.
1638. Mar. The Scottish Covenant.
1639. June. Pacification of Berwick.
1640. Apr. 13. Short Parliament meets.  
 May 5. King dissolves the Short  
 Parliament.  
 Aug. 28. Scotch defeat English at  
 Newburn.  
 Nov. 3. Long Parliament meets.  
 Nov. 11. Strafford impeached.
1641. Mar. 22. Trial of Strafford begins.  
 May 12. Execution of Strafford.  
 Aug.-Nov. King in Scotland.  
 Nov. Irish rebellion breaks out.  
 Nov. 20. Grand Remonstrance passed.  
 Nov. 25. King returns to London.
1642. Jan. 4. King tries to arrest the five  
 Members.  
 Mar. 19. King arrives in York.  
 Aug. 22. King raises standard at  
 Nottingham.  
 Oct. 23. Battle of Edgehill.

1643. Sept. 20. First battle of Newbury.
1644. Jan. Scots invade England.  
July 2. Battle of Marston Moor.  
Aug. 31. Surrender at Lostwithiel.  
Oct. 27. Second battle of Newbury.
1645. June 14. Battle of Naseby.
1646. May 6. King goes to the Scots.
1647. Jan. 30. King delivered to Parliament.  
June 4. Cornet Joyce takes the King  
from Holmby.  
Nov. 11. King escapes to the Isle of  
Wight.  
Dec. 26. King signs engagement with  
Scotch.
1648. Apr.-Aug. Second Civil War.  
Sept. 13- Negotiations at Newport.  
Nov. 27.  
Dec. 1. King taken to Hurst Castle.  
Dec. 6. Pride's Purge.  
Dec. 21. King brought to Windsor.
1649. Jan. 20-7. King's trial.  
Jan. 30. Execution of King.

*To*  
THE DOWAGER COUNTESS OF JERSEY

## CHAPTER I

1600 — 1625

Birth of Charles — rule of James — Buckingham — expedition to Spain — death of James.

ON March 27, 1625, King Charles I succeeded his father James on the throne of England. On June 18 of that year he made his first speech to his Lords and Commons assembled at Westminster. All that his listeners saw was a short, pale young man, dark-haired and grey-eyed, while they heard in his speech a Scotch accent and the slight hesitations of a cured stutterer. A dispassionate observer, like the Venetian Ambassador, might have noticed "a truly royal presence, a grave brow and much grace in his eyes and the movements of his body," but most of the observers were too occupied with their own hopes and fears to be dispassionate. During the last eighteen months this young man had fed their hopes and soothed their fears, but already his popularity was on the wane, and, though he did not know it, he was surrounded by hostile forces.

What these forces were, and how far he was capable of dealing with them, may be gathered from a short account of his youth and the character of England at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century.

Charles Stuart was born on November 19, 1600, at Dunfermline Palace, to James VI of Scotland, and his wife, Anne of Denmark. He



was a delicate infant, hardly expected to live, and his parents reserved their ambitious dreams for his sister Elizabeth and his elder brother Henry, who were both handsome, hardy children. In March 1603, when Charles was two years old, Queen Elizabeth died, decrepit and hideous, but feared, worshipped, and loved by the majority of her subjects. King James, with a sigh of relief, left his barren northern kingdom, where life was one long struggle with his Scottish chiefs, and progressed through the rich counties of England to be crowned James I at Westminster. Here, he knew, royalty was held in proper esteem and here he hoped to pass the rest of his days in peace and plenty. Peace he achieved, but plenty he took for granted, and the King's bounty to his friends, who were principally Scotchmen, helped to embarrass the Treasury long after James was dead. What was worse, he lowered the prestige of the Crown; and the Crown was largely sustained by its prestige, not on reason, as James, an intellectual Scotchman, had imagined, nor on force. There was no Army; the Navy was largely a collection of private adventurers; there was no efficient Civil Service with traditions of probity and a vested interest in the continuance of the Government. Every department had to be farmed out to men who paid heavily for their posts and expected to make fortunes from their perquisites. Above all, there was no regular source of income sufficient to carry on the Government except in the most meagre manner. The value of money had been falling ever since the discovery of America, therefore the value of land had risen and Crown lands which had been sold to meet

current expenses became more valuable to their new owners every year. The dissolution of the monasteries had further enriched the landed classes, who were now an extremely formidable body with their new wealth, their new learning, their new religion, and their new political ambitions.

These were the classes among whom James had every reason to expect his enemies, yet he made no serious attempt to win them. Perhaps he knew himself to be lacking in charm, physically ridiculous, even repellent, so contented himself with the company of a few chosen friends, while hoping to overawe the rest of his subjects with his superior shrewdness and learning. Up to a point he was successful, but his House of Commons felt towards him the resentment of servants whose employer "talks sarcastic" and whom they will pay out as soon as they have the chance.

Their hopes at first were fixed on Henry, Prince of Wales, a very different type from his father. He was dashing, bellicose, violently anti-Catholic, while James reserved his religious hatred for the Calvinists who had embittered his life in Scotland and who were already threatening the regal power in England. But before Henry had time to fulfil the high destiny prophesied for him – in fact he was only eighteen – he took cold after a game of tennis and a few days later was dead. He was rumoured to have been poisoned – not without his father's connivance ; so flagrant was their mutual antagonism.

This was in November 1612, when Charles was barely twelve years old. Hitherto he had been overlooked as an insignificant weakling, but now

he was heir to the throne of England, and henceforward became the focus of public attention. An immense development had marked his last few years. At four he had been hardly able to walk or talk and only the determination of his governess had prevented James from slitting the child's tongue-strings and making him wear irons on his legs. Exercise and increasing health in time strengthened his legs, but not until the days of his Trial did he speak without hesitation. Throughout his early years he had humbly admired and imitated his elder brother. He learned to ride and to tilt with mastery, and later he danced well and delighted in archery and all the weapons of war. During Henry's lifetime he had contemplated a military career and was furious when his hearty brother had suggested an archbishop's hat and gown as more suitable for his theological brain and weak legs. Now that he was to be King he tried to equip himself by physical training and by study of political affairs, but it never occurred to him to form a party against his father, whom he loved and respected. Already that strong Stuart characteristic was noticeable in him, a mixture of loyalty and misanthropy, which makes men cling to their family and friends and view the rest of the world with indifference or dislike. Nevertheless there was much in his father's way of life which was increasingly uncongenial to him as he grew up. The drunkenness, the undignified buffoonery, the extravagance in the midst of poverty, jarred on Charles, whose fastidious, orderly mind already found its greatest pleasure in Venetian painting and the formal splendour of masques. James's

policy of peace at any price was no less distasteful to his son, who nursed romantic ideas of military glory. He longed for England to play an honourable part in the European conflagration which broke out in 1618 and was known to later ages as the Thirty Years War.

An English princess was involved in that conflagration. Charles's only surviving sister, Elizabeth, popular, spirited, and clever, had married in 1613 the Prince Elector of the Palatinate, a rash young man of the Calvinist persuasion. In 1617 he had accepted the crown of Bohemia from the Protestant rebels who had refused to acknowledge the Catholic Emperor Ferdinand as their sovereign. The Emperor could depend on the alliance of Spain, so the Elector was soon driven out of Bohemia and his own principality of the Palatinate as well. He and his English wife and their numerous children had to take refuge in Holland and call on all Englishmen and Protestants for support, and on those who feared the Emperor and Spain.

Here was a nice quandary for King James. He loved his daughter and wanted to save her from exile and ruin, but all his life he had avoided war; and, moreover, for the last ten years he had been trying to build up an alliance with Spain and marry his son to a Spanish princess. That such a match was hated by the majority of his subjects did not trouble him. He merely despised their ignorance and fanaticism. But now popular sympathy with the Princess Palatine, and the feeling that the Government ought to "do something" about her, grew so strong that James decided to demand her reinstatement as part of

the Spanish dowry. Charles was still keener on this point. When he was thirteen his sister had seemed to him a dazzling creature, and now he longed to rescue her in her misfortunes, if not by his marriage with an unknown Catholic princess, then at the point of the sword. Either way he would try his manhood and escape from the timid policy but domineering rule of his father. He found an unexpected ally in this emergency ; his father's favourite, George Villiers, Marquess of Buckingham.

This man had not yet won the envious hostility to be expected from his astonishing rise to power. He had come to London to seek his fortune in 1614, a poor Leicestershire squire of twenty-one, and had the luck to appear at Court just when James's former favourite was falling into disgrace. James liked beautiful, gay young men more than women and wine, though he was very fond of wine. Villiers's quite outstanding beauty is the one point on which all his contemporaries are agreed, and most of them, even his enemies, admit his gracious, modest manners and flowing affability to all men. What neither James nor the courtiers at first realised were his warlike and patriotic ambitions, or he might not have been so speedily created Lord High Admiral as well as Master of the Horse and Marquess of Buckingham. He at once set about repairing the Navy, which had been allowed to rot for the last fifteen years, reforming abuses and spending money with all the public spirit of one who is not going to spoil the King's ships for a halfpennyworth of tar, and whose own income has been changed overnight from hundreds into tens of thousands.

But all Buckingham's charm failed at first to endear him to the Prince of Wales. That Charles should be jealous of this new favourite was not surprising. He was now a young man, but his father still treated him as a child and showered all his favours on an ignorant and apparently frivolous upstart who exchanged nicknames with the King and indulged in any knock-about buffoonery that his master enjoyed. Charles always found it easier to repress than express his feelings, but his hatred for Buckingham was already the subject of common gossip. The Venetian Ambassador feared that the Prince's efforts at self-control might end by making him too adept in the arts of dissimulation, but noted hopefully that he had once or twice "shown his teeth." Yet before having occasion to use them, all his enmity had vanished, and he discovered that his nationalist, crusading dreams were far more sympathetic to Buckingham than James's cautious statecraft. Their mutual reconciliation was cemented during the intrigues surrounding the prospective Spanish marriage.

This marriage was the dearest wish of James's heart and he longed to see it celebrated before he died. Negotiations had been going on for years between Count Gondomar, the Spanish Ambassador in London, and Lord Bristol, the English Ambassador in Madrid. The Spanish ecclesiastics and statesmen could not bear their Princess to marry a heretic, except in exchange for privileges to the persecuted English Catholics that James was in no position to grant. On the other hand, they feared an open breach with England, and by continuing negotiations hoped

to avert the disastrous effects of a definite refusal.

Gondomar had little idea of the strength of religious feeling either at home or in England, and decided that a display of energy would promote a successful conclusion, either with Charles's conversion or with Spanish toleration of his heresy. He advised Buckingham to take the Prince to Spain and assured him that they would certainly return with the Infanta. Buckingham was a man of action and the idea appealed to him immensely. Charles was not only longing to be a man of action ; he was also anxious to be married as soon as possible. Together they persuaded James to give his consent to the expedition, in spite of his terror both of wrecking the match and of losing his " Baby Charles " and his " Dog Steenie," his nickname for Buckingham, who, in return, wrote to him as " Dear Dad and Gossip." Part of Buckingham's success lay in this apparent familiarity, verging on disrespect, with his two masters, which concealed actually a complete devotion to their commands. His only defection was a change of allegiance from James to Charles before James died. From the day that the two young men left England in disguise on the long journey to Spain, James's rule was at an end, and Charles, backed and inflamed by Buckingham, took control.

Their unexpected arrival in Madrid in March 1623, after a rapid journey across France, struck horror into the hearts of the Spanish Ministers and the English Ambassador alike. Bristol was anxious for the marriage, but if that was impossible he was quite happy simply to go on negotiating and avoid a breach between the two countries. Now

here was the Prince of Wales, under the influence of a friend who seemed to the diplomat ignorant and presumptuous, demanding, not only the Infanta, but Spanish help in the restitution of the Palatinate while offering some nebulous favours to English Catholics in exchange. Neither the King of Spain, Philip IV, young and very pious, nor his powerful Minister, Olivares, was any better pleased than Bristol, while the Infanta Maria, the King's sister, was terrified and talked of going into a nunnery. At first it was thought that Charles's arrival must herald his conversion, and he was treated with elaborate courtesy, though he was scarcely allowed to speak to his promised bride. He kept up the illusion by behaving respectfully in the presence of an alien ritual, and impressed the Spanish people by his grave and dignified demeanour. But, if he went down well, Buckingham did not go down at all. His gorgeous extravagance of dress, his free and easy manners, alike with his master and the Spanish grandees, his impetuous speech and laughter, all which in England won admiration, in Spain marked him out as a bounder and a cad. In this hostile atmosphere, Buckingham, who was quick-witted enough, especially when personal feelings were involved, grew suspicious both of Spanish good faith and Bristol's patriotism. The necessary dispensation for the marriage was indefinitely delayed, in spite of a letter from Charles to the Pope which would have caused much agitation in Protestant hearts if it had been published in England, while no promise could be wrung from Philip to restore the Palatinate. As soon as Buckingham decided that the whole expedition



had been a waste of time, he was filled with resentment against all Spaniards, especially Olivares and Gondomar, and against Hispanophiles such as Bristol. At once he set about detaching Charles's mind from any idea of the Infanta. Charles, however, had been courting her for many months, and the thought of returning to England without her was deeply humiliating to his proud, reserved spirit. On the other hand, he could not, in honour, abandon his luckless sister or his religious beliefs. With bitterness in his heart against all foreigners, Catholics, and women, and with growing gratitude towards Buckingham who had saved him from these dangers, he decided to leave Madrid. He thought it wiser to say nothing of his change of plans till he was safely out of Spain, and parted from Philip with lavish cordiality, but nevertheless sent, before he sailed, a messenger to Madrid, forbidding Bristol to proceed with the marriage negotiations. The two knights errant arrived at Portsmouth in October, after eight months' absence, and were met by such an outburst of popular enthusiasm as neither was to know again. To the average Englishman it seemed as if his future ruler had returned from the mouth of hell and the man who had brought him back was Buckingham. At last King James's pro-Spanish policy would be overturned, and overturned by his son and his favourite. The instinctive antagonism of the governed against the Government now found a leader who had hitherto been universally envied as the chief recipient of the King's glittering bounty.<sup>1</sup> Buckingham

<sup>1</sup> During Buckingham's absence in Spain, James had advanced him to a dukedom.

had much ado to break down his old master's love of peace. James wept while his son and his favourite alternately bullied and coaxed him.<sup>1</sup> They talked of Charles's honour, the Palatinate, Spanish perfidy, and England's future glories. They felt that the country was behind them, and, certain of general support, demanded a Parliament which would vote the necessary subsidies to carry on a war with Spain. James hated the thought of Parliament. He had parted from his last one in fury and he knew its members preferred clipping the royal authority to voting supplies. However, he had to submit, and in February 1624 the last Parliament of his reign was summoned. He had to submit to worse indignities still ; the impeachment of his Treasurer, Lionel Cranfield, whom he had created Earl of Middlesex, and whose pro-Spanish sympathies had driven him to work for Buckingham's disgrace. Buckingham never forgot a friend nor forgave an enemy, and all Middlesex's financial efficiency could not save him from being delivered to trial, the Commons hounding on the Peers to destroy a man whose corruptions were, in their eyes, only less iniquitous than his fidelity to the throne.

<sup>1</sup> That Charles was now completely devoted to Buckingham may be gauged by a letter written in April 1624, when James had shown signs of backsliding into the Spanish alliance.

"Do not oppose or show yourself discontented with the King's course herein, for I think it will be so far from doing you hurt, that it will make you trample under your feet those few poor rascals that are still your enemies. Now, sweet heart, if you think I am mistaken in my judgement in this, let me know what I can do in this or anything else to serve thee and then thou shalt see, what all the world shall daily know more and more, that I am and ever will be

Your faithful, loving, constant friend,

CHARLES P."

In the end, James succumbed to the combined arguments of the two beings he loved best.

“By God! Steenie, you are a fool!” cried James in one of his bursts of shrewdness. “You are making a rod for your own back.” And to Charles he added words which the latter might years afterwards remember with tears: “You will have your bellyful of impeachments.” But Buckingham, at the height of his popularity, saw Middlesex disgraced and ruined without a thought of the eagerness with which the pack would turn on him, when standing beside a king against his rebellious subjects. In the House, by telling the story of the Prince’s ordeal in Spain, he had gained the general applause. Old Sir Edward Coke, a veteran leader of the Commons, the most learned and quarrelsome of lawyers in an age prolific in such specimens, called Buckingham his “saviour,” and added, with doubtful felicity, that the thought of war with Spain made him seven years younger. The universal cry was for war, but the nature of the war was very differently conceived in the Court and the Commons. Charles and Buckingham intended a Continental crusade to restore the Palatinate to the Elector, a crusade to be undertaken in alliance with France and facilitated by a marriage between Charles and the French King’s sister. The country squires and merchants who sat in Parliament envisaged piratical expeditions against Spanish treasure-ships, accompanied by additional fines and persecution for the Catholics at home in the best Elizabethan tradition. In this way they hoped to make the war pay for itself, and if the Princess Palatine were still unrestored at the end they could at least say they had done their best to assist her. “Are we poor?” cried Sir John Eliot,

a rising young orator. "Spain is rich. There are our Indies. Break with them ; we shall break our necessities together." Therefore the subsidies that the Commons voted for the war were not as large as might have been expected from their enthusiasm, and only sufficed to equip a wretched pressed army under a mercenary soldier, Count Mansfelt. The King of France, Louis XIII – or, rather, Cardinal Richelieu, who really controlled the Government – showing little cordiality to his new ally, refused to allow Mansfelt's army to pass through French territory. The expedition was doomed from the start, and Charles and Buckingham were held entirely responsible by the men who had light-heartedly cheered the thought of war. James, who saw all his plans crumbling to ruin, died on March 27, 1625, before the results of an opposite policy became apparent. It was a sign of the evaporating popularity of Buckingham that he was rumoured to have poisoned his master, and a few daring spirits even suggested that Charles himself was not ignorant in the matter.

## CHAPTER II

1625 — 1626

State of England — religious feeling — first Parliament — Henrietta Maria — expedition to Cadiz.

CHARLES became King of England at the age of twenty-four. In character, beliefs, and upbringing he was out of sympathy with the spirit of the age. From his father and the Tudors he had inherited traditions of a centralised bureaucracy, radiating from the monarchy, through the Privy Council, into each department of the national life. The King made peace and war, chose representatives for all the offices of State, from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the county sheriffs ; he thus controlled the whole governmental machine. Charles had every intention of using his authority conscientiously for the welfare of his people at home and the greatness of England abroad, but he had no intention of abandoning it to the landowners and merchants assembled in the House of Commons. But this was what the spirit of the age demanded. In England it was a time of intense and growing individualism, both social and religious. Having thrown off the authority of the Roman Church, the upper classes were determined not to be bridled by the King in the name of the nation. Their patriotism was of a purely local kind, not extending beyond their own counties ; and, as in the early nineteenth century, the tide of opinion was flowing against bureaucratic planning and in favour of *laissez-faire*. In

the seventeenth century, however, the Government – that is, the King and his chosen councillors – set their faces against individualism, which to them seemed a tyranny of the ignorant and strong over the ignorant and weak, leading to anarchy. Thus Charles was bound to come into conflict with the House of Commons, which was largely composed of men who felt his rule a check on their natural development.

It has already been explained that the King was dependent on subsidies to carry on the government in time of war. Therefore, as long as war continued or threatened, the members of Parliament had him in their power and could use his necessities for their own purposes. This was their principal weapon against him ; there was another, almost as strong – namely, religious emotion.

Among the forces which had brought about the Reformation and founded the Church of England were : the normal layman's envy of clerical riches and power ; materialism, fostered by the new wealth and learning of the Renaissance ; humanism and its ideal of the superb aristocrat, incompatible with a corporate Church herding together sheep and goats, but instead demanded a sharper sorting out of man from man, the saved from the damned ; and nationalism, which resented an international organisation with a foreign Pope dominating English religious life. Only with the last of these emotions was Charles in sympathy. He loved his Church as representative and peculiar to his own country, and both for moral and political reasons he deeply valued his position at its head. This position was in

itself an assertion of lay supremacy, but in no other way could he be called anti-clerical. He desired the hierarchy to be held in high esteem, churches to be adorned by painting and sculpture, and a ritual glorious to sight and hearing in continuous use throughout England. He met with opposition from various sources. The anti-clericals hoped that the Church as a separate power had been destroyed at the Reformation. Now they saw it rising again, its bishops exercising influence with the King, forcing congregations to rebuild and beautify the edifices which had been half destroyed by the iconoclasts of Edward VI's day and neglected for eighty years. Many of the gentry looked on churches only as useful repositories for family tombs and for family pews which emphasised class distinctions and where a man might sleep and smoke in peace while keeping up the appearance of respectability. An altar or choir-stall was a waste of space and of money which could be more profitably spent in the home.

If the opponents of the Church could not bear to see its alliance with the King, the opponents of the King, the incipient republicans, could not bear his alliance with the Church. They wanted the moral and emotional weapon of organised religion in their hands, its clerics to be the mouth-pieces of their aspirations, to spread their propaganda – not the King's.

Then there were genuine theological differences between Charles and a large minority of his subjects, followers of Calvin, called in England Puritans, who thought of the Church as a small body of the elect, a spiritual aristocracy, surrounded by the hosts of the damned. These

men, who nourished themselves on the newly translated Old Testament, were proud of having advanced from the superstition of a visibly beautiful Church. They demanded its destruction, as an obstacle between the Word of God and His congregation, and that the final damnation of the wicked should be rehearsed in this world.

These various emotions inspired different leaders in the House of Commons, but all members were united in violent anti-Catholicism, partly instinctive, partly cultivated as a political weapon. The fortunes of so many of the richer landowners, their new houses and gardens, were founded on the spoliation of the monasteries and the acquisition of abbey lands. Their very civilisation dated from the ruin of Catholicism. Men who, in spite of regular fines and even intermittent sharper persecution, clung to the old Faith were looked on as reactionaries, unpatriotic, would-be wreckers of this brave new world. On the Continent the Thirty Years War was raging between the two religions. Every Protestant Englishman felt it was in the interest of English civilisation that the Catholic Emperor and his Spanish allies should be defeated, and they suspected English Catholics as possible traitors to their country should the struggle involve England. That was the natural reaction of the average Englishman towards members of the old religion ; but there was another reason for the virulence of the politicians. They had discovered the advantages of using a minority as national scapegoats. The dangers of toleration, the pernicious influence of priests and Jesuits, could always be invoked to confuse any issue and fan general discontents



into a particular blaze. In any community the injunction to love one's neighbour is always at war with the instinct to do him down, and the majority are delighted when they are told that a certain sect is outside the pale of humanity and that none of the usual laws of justice apply in this instance. Therefore, in appropriating the "No Popery" cry, the popular leaders acquired an invaluable weapon.

Charles, since the Spanish expedition, had no love of Catholicism, and really wanted to help the Protestant cause in Europe; but he was incapable, both by temperament and upbringing, of the bigoted hatreds of the ignorant, or of the unscrupulous appeals to those hatreds in which the politicians excelled. He could occasionally throw a Jesuit to the hungry multitude to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, but these acts of grace, apart from being repugnant to his unbloodthirsty nature, were otherwise undesirable. Two months after his father's death he had married Henrietta Maria, sister of the King of France, and the marriage treaty included a promise that the persecution of English Catholics should cease. In return he hoped for the help of France in restoring the Palatinate to the Elector, his brother-in-law. Therefore, if he gratified his subjects in the only way apparently possible, he risked the French alliance. Yet, if he pursued a policy of toleration, the Commons would feel justified in refusing subsidies to carry on the war with Spain in which he was already involved.

In this tangle, a very clever, unprincipled man might have been able to find his own way out, at the expense of his religion and his servants. But

Charles was neither clever nor unprincipled. He was intelligent and industrious, with a good grasp of the general political situation, tenacious in friendship and enmity, determined to uphold the authority of the Crown, his Faith, and his followers. If he believed in a man enough to give him office he refused either to abandon him to popular outcry or shelter behind him in an emergency. As a further handicap his character and mind had little in common with the average Englishman's. Charles was by birth half Scotch, half Danish. Mentally honest, logical, and conscientious, he attempted to guide his actions by his intellectual conclusions. The Englishmen of his day were intensely emotional, without the tradition of reserve they have since acquired, demonstrative, tearful, and litigious. To foreigners they appeared extravagant, even vulgarly so. Their speeches and writings were full of rich, confused fancies, of undigested learning and irrelevant pedantries. To Charles and all the more sophisticated men at Court, whose language was comparatively modern and matter-of-fact, the eloquence of the Parliamentary leaders must have seemed almost as ridiculous as it would nowadays, but it succeeded in inflaming their listeners as his rational speeches never could. His stammer gave an embarrassed roughness to his manner and he could not find the necessary graceful nothings to propitiate the crowds of courtiers and petitioners that continually surrounded him. He was happiest in the company of artists, engineers, and soldiers, dealing with things rather than with people. His one great friend, Buckingham, dazzled him by his power of

recklessly translating into action his master's ultimate aims. For the King, though clear about his ends, was always uncertain about the means, while his opponents were confused enough in theory but infinitely more accomplished in practice.

Thus, on June 18, 1625, when Charles met his first Parliament, there was already a great, though as yet invisible, gulf fixed between him and his audience. His chief object was to raise a subsidy for the war with Spain, and to this end he appealed both to their honour and generosity.

“ . . . My Lords and gentlemen : I hope that you do remember, that you were pleased to employ me to advise my father, to break off those two treaties that were then on foot : so that I cannot say, that I came hither a free, unengaged man. It is true, I came into this business willingly and freely, like a young man, and consequently rashly ; but it was by your interest, your engagements. . . . I pray you remember, that this being my first action, and begun by your advice and entreaty, what a great dishonour it were both to you and me if this action so begun, should fail of that assistance you are able to give me. Yet knowing the constancy of your love both to me and this business, I needed not to have said this, but only to shew what care and sense I have of your honours and mine own. . . . ”

Flattery and appeal to their better feelings were alike unsuccessful with the Commons. They concentrated on such religious grievances as the toleration of Papists and the advancement of a certain anti-Calvinistic clergyman who had won the approbation of King James. To carry on the

war they offered two subsidies – about a quarter of what was needed to equip the fleet and give effectual help to the Protestant cause abroad. Buckingham had pledged £50,000 of his own fortune towards preparing the fleet and he felt that his country's honour as well as his own were bound up in the success of a warlike policy. He determined to appeal once more to the House, before they adjourned to avoid the plague now raging in London. One of his friends in the Commons feared the results of such a course, and sent a popular member to remonstrate with the Duke. This was Sir John Eliot, Vice-Admiral for Devon, and hitherto believed to be his supporter. He owed his office to Buckingham, who had been his travelling companion in youth when Eliot was already rich and the other poor. The great man had not forgotten his old friend, but Eliot bore him a secret grudge for not promoting him to higher office nearer the centre of government, and this grudge, combined with reckless courage, a hysterical and credulous imagination, together with great rhetorical gifts, made him a dangerous opponent. His egotism found expression in a superstitious reverence for the House of which he was a member, and he longed to see it the supreme authority in the State. Therefore, when Buckingham told him that the war must be carried on somehow with or without the support of the Commons' subsidies, all Eliot's subconscious hatred for the Duke crystallised, seeing him as the enemy of the people and his destruction a worthy task for a patriot. For the moment, Eliot did not reveal this ; he simply assured him that the Commons would not vote the additional

subsidies. So, in the event, it proved. On August 1, Parliament, which had been adjourned, met in Oxford, but the members were no more inclined there than in London to finance the war. They were already showing signs of attacking Buckingham personally when Charles dissolved them after a twelve days' sitting. He must see what he could do without their help.

Domestic dissension was now adding to his difficulties. When he had first met his wife at Dover in the June of that year he had been charmed. She was only fifteen, very small, but pretty, lively, and as ready to win her husband's love as he was to welcome her. They were both anxious to be married, their first impressions were favourable and their respective temperaments were quite compatible. She was quick-witted and quick-tempered, pious but not at all serious, loyal to her native country and her Faith, but ignorant and uninterested in statecraft except as far as it concerned her friends. All went well at first and Charles was conspicuously merry, but, before long, Henrietta's pieties and loyalties came between them. She had brought a great train of French priests and ladies and they soon found cause for complaint in their own treatment and that of their fellow Catholics in England. For in order to gratify the House of Commons the laws against Papists had been tightened rather than loosened in the last few months and the Queen could do nothing for her co-religionists.

Bitterly disappointed, she listened willingly to her French attendants and their abuse of everything English, including her husband, who had so miserably failed to practise the toleration promised

in the marriage treaty. Charles, in return, ascribing all his matrimonial troubles to their malign influence, felt certain that he would never know any peace till they were out of England. As early as November 1625 he was writing to Buckingham of the "maliciousness of the Monsieurs, by making and fomenting discontentment in my wife," but it was not till August 1626 that he finally decided to expel them. Things had gone from bad to worse, and he summed up his miseries in a letter to be shown to the King of France explaining away the apparent ill-treatment of his sister. Charles described how, when she met him at Dover, "I could not expect more testimonies of respect and love. . . . Her first suit was, that she being young and coming to a strange country . . . I would not be angry with her for her faults of ignorance . . . and desired me in these cases, to use no third person but to tell her myself, when I found she did anything amiss. I both granted her request and thanked her for it ; but desired that she would use me as she had desired me to use her ; which she willingly promised me, which promise she never kept." Then he described how she had publicly sent insulting answers to his messages, how she avoided him, so that he had to use one of her servants as mediator if he wished to speak to her, how she refused to learn English and neglected the nation in general. Their quarrels had culminated in Henrietta giving him, when they were in bed, a paper containing the names of those whom she wished to appoint as officers to her revenue. When Charles said that he would allow no Frenchmen in these posts, Henrietta replied that

she and her mother had chosen them together. Charles retorted that such affairs were neither in her mother's power nor hers to settle. "Then she fell into a passionate discourse, how miserable she was, in having no power to place servants, and that business succeeded the worse for her recommendation; which, when I offered to answer, she would not so much as hear me. Then she went on saying she was not of such base quality to be used so ill. Then I made her both hear me and end that discourse." Charles, in desperation, had decided to cut the knot of his difficulties. On August 7 he wrote a short note to Buckingham :

"I command you send all the French away to-morrow out of the town. If you can, by fair means (but stick not long in disputing) otherwise force them away; driving them away like so many wild beasts, until you have shipped them; and so the Devil go with them! Let me hear no answer but of the performance of my command."

Buckingham carried out his orders, and the Queen's attendants, loudly protesting, were firmly conducted out of England. They were generously compensated with gifts by the King, but their ejection was another blow to the Anglo-French alliance. There had been a painful scene when Charles had taken his wife into an empty room and broken to her the news of her future isolation. She had smashed the window with her hands in an endeavour to bid a last farewell to her friends, and for several weeks after their departure she was in constant tears and low spirits. But the desperate remedy did in the end

take effect. She was forced to make acquaintances in her adopted country and to win her husband by kindness as she had failed to do by tantrums. As long as Buckingham lived she could never hope for much intellectual intimacy with Charles. That was all given to the man whom the King considered the most brilliant, and knew to be the most devoted, of his subjects. Compared to him, Henrietta Maria seemed to her husband a simple girl, on whom he was prepared to expend all his domestic affection, but who could not occupy his serious attention. From this inauspicious beginning, ultimately arose a married love which has seldom been surpassed.

But we must return to the autumn of 1625 and the problems then confronting the King and his chief Minister. Buckingham could see that his former popularity had disappeared, and though his credit was as strong as ever with the King, his power of carrying out his grandiose schemes would be hopelessly crippled without the moral and financial support of the nation. He hoped that one spectacular victory against Spain would restore him to his countrymen's hearts and loosen their purse-strings for the future. He thought that their obvious distrust of the King's policy and his Minister was due to temporary misunderstandings and the failure of Mansfelt's expedition. He never realised that his popularity had been but temporary as largely due to his opposition to King James over the Spanish marriage. As soon as it became clear that he stood for monarchical authority against Parliamentary encroachment he became the butt of all the envy and hatred his elevated position could



attract. What most exasperated the Commons was that he stood between them and the King, and, as all the principal Councillors were his friends or relations, no whisper could pass up the front or back stairs to the royal ears without the interposition of one of his creatures. The popular leaders still thought of Charles as a mild, weak creature whom they could easily have controlled but for the evil influence of the Duke. They did not yet know that Charles was far the less malleable of the two. Buckingham was sometimes reckless, but he was prepared to make concessions to public opinion rather than let King and Parliament drift into open warfare. But Charles was determined not to be moved in his policy by popular outcry ; above all, not to give up his Ministers. He continued ostentatiously to support Buckingham when he was an object of universal hatred, partly because he loved and admired him, but also because on principle he would not yield his inherited right to hold Ministers responsible to the Crown alone. When two other Councillors, in the spring of 1626, advised the King to imprison them rather than forgo his subsidies and breed differences with the House of Commons, he replied : " Let them do what they list, you shall not go to the Tower ; it is not you that they aim at, but it is upon me that they make inquisition – and for subsidies, that will not hinder it. Gold may be bought too dear."

With such views, therefore, Charles never looked on Buckingham as other than the King's deputy, the man who with his magnificent presence, devotion, and daring could express perfectly the

ideas which Charles entertained behind a veil of diffidence and reserve.

In the autumn of 1625 the dominating idea was still the Protestant alliance. The fleet sailed for Spain in October under two soldiers, Sir Edward Cecil and the Earl of Essex, with the idea of raiding Cadiz and capturing the Spanish treasure-ships on their return from the West Indies. The expedition was a complete failure. The commanders were timid, the sailors mutinous for lack of pay, and the Commons' antipathy to Buckingham infected everybody and rotted the spirit of the enterprise. Sickness broke out, the Spanish treasure-ships sailed safely into harbour, and the English returned with nothing to show but the long death-roll of their sailors. In the meanwhile, Buckingham had been at The Hague, arranging an alliance with the Dutch and Danes in support of the Protestant cause in Germany. He attempted to finance the allies by pawning the Crown jewels, and promised a subsidy of £30,000 a month to the King of Denmark – to be granted by the English Parliament. He returned to England in December, and was greeted with news of the failure of the Cadiz fleet and all the bright hopes of Spanish treasure he had been building on. Nevertheless he was surprisingly optimistic about public opinion. He knew the reverse to be largely due to lack of necessary supplies, a lack he hoped to see remedied in the forthcoming Parliament. When that body met on February 6, 1626, the outcome was very different from his expectations.

## CHAPTER III

1626 — 1629

Second Parliament — Sir John Eliot — Buckingham impeached —  
— expedition to Rhé — Buckingham murdered.

IN this Parliament of 1626, Sir John Eliot leapt into fame to become the leader of the House of Commons. He was truly representative of his fellow Members, both in his gifts and his limitations. He was a rich squire, powerful in his own county, learned in the political history of England, the law, and Latin authors, with quotations from whose works he plentifully besprinkled his orations. At that time all arguments in the House were supported by appeals to precedent, however irrelevant. A man would quote an incident from Henry VI's reign which would be capped by one from Richard II's or Edward I's, and the more ancient the precedent the more efficacious it was considered. Eliot was an adept at this ; his classical learning gave a republican colour to his mind, while his confused imagination found nothing incompatible in a supreme House of Commons and the continuance of the regal power. His overpowering hatred of Buckingham, combined with courage and eloquence, brought him at once to the front.

As soon as Parliament met, the Secretary for Naval Affairs asked for money to carry on the war. Eliot immediately demanded that inquiry should precede supply, and in a fiery speech

hinted at the author of the recent disasters. "Our honour is ruined, our ships are sunk, our men perished; not by the sword, not by the enemy; not by chance, but as the strongest predictions had discerned and made it apparent beforehand, by those we trust." Inflamed by Eliot's oratory, other members began to murmur against Buckingham, and when the King sent a message urging the necessity of immediate provision for the fleet, Clement Coke, the son of the famous lawyer, Sir Edward Coke, expressed the general feeling when he exclaimed: "It was better to die by an enemy than suffer at home." In more modern language, the only war the Commons cared about was the class war.

Coke was followed by a Dr. Turner with suggestions that public inquiry should investigate the Duke's conduct, alleging his corruption, avarice, and Catholic leanings, and complaining of his failure personally to lead the expedition against Cadiz. Buckingham took all these attacks very coolly, but Charles was determined the House should know that in accusing Buckingham they were accusing the King. On March 28 he called both Houses into his presence at Whitehall, and, after vindicating his responsibility to Buckingham through the mouth of the Lord Keeper, he dared to tell the Commons that they also had responsibilities. He reminded them that their counsel and support had encouraged his father and him to break off the Spanish treaties. ". . . Then there was nobody in so great favour with you as this man, whom you seem now to touch, but indeed my father's government and mine. Now that you have all things according to

your wishes you begin to set the dice and make your own game. But, I pray you be not deceived, it is not a parliamentary way, nor it is not a way to deal with a King." He joined issue with Clement Coke, and declared that it was more honour for a King to be "almost destroyed" by a foreign enemy than to be despised by his own subjects. "Remember that Parliaments are altogether in my power, for their calling, sitting and dissolution; therefore as I find the fruits of them good or evil they are to continue, or not to be."

These words, bluntly pointing out that the real quarrel was between King and Commons, not Commons and Buckingham, must have been singularly unpalatable to the listeners. They did not yet dare to touch the King, even in their thoughts. Tradition and public opinion were still too strong. Their only course was to continue their attack on Buckingham. The Minister thought a quiet, sensible speech would convince them of his innocence, and this he made, modestly admitting possible errors of judgment, but none of intention. "There are no errors of wilfulness, nor of corruption, nor oppressing of the people, nor injustice."

His words had no effect. The Commons were determined to prove him guilty, not merely of incompetence, but of high treason. On May 8 they carried up to the House of Lords an impeachment wherein Buckingham was accused of acquiring exorbitant power, plurality of offices, buying and selling these offices, neglecting the duties of Lord High Admiral, oppressing merchants, lending ships to the King of France to be

used against the Huguenots, concealing his speculations by muddling Government accounts and "presumptuously giving medicine to King James in his last illness." There were eight "managers" of the prosecution, and, after seven had spoken at great length, Sir John Eliot rose to make the concluding speech. With all the hatred of his old friend burning in his heart, he really let himself go. He spoke of the Duke's mind, "full of collusion and deceit. I can express it no better than by the beast, called by the ancients 'Stellionatus,' a beast so blurred, so spotted, so full of foul lines that they know not what to make of it." Eliot then denounced his corruption, his treachery, his extortion. "He intercepts, consumes and exhausts the Crown, not only to satisfy his own lustful desires but the luxury of others." He then hinted that Buckingham had poisoned his old master and compared the favourite to Sejanus, bold in accomplishing his own ends, in other matters cowardly, alternately obsequious and insolent, and so identifying his interests with the King's as to assume the rôle of ruler.

The speech had a tremendous effect – though, like much political rhetoric before and since, it insinuated falsehoods where not actually untrue and was mostly beside the point. On sophisticated auditors it made an unfavourable impression. Lord Montagu, no friend to Buckingham, mentioned in his diary: "Sir John Eliot's epitome, which falling into very foul speeches against the Duke, nothing pertinent to the matter of charge, were most distasted, but as then nothing said to it." Buckingham felt certain of proving his

innocence. A month after the impeachment he rose in the House of Lords and made one of his pleasant, matter-of-fact speeches, strongly in contrast to the violence of his accusers. He ended by defending his devotion to the State. "I was born and bred in it. I owe it my life. I have been raised to honours and fortunes in it, I freely confess, beyond my merits. What I wanted in sufficiency and experience for the service of it, I have endeavoured to supply by care and industry. Could there be the least alienation hereafter of my heart from the service of the State . . . I should be the ungratefullest man living. Should but a thought stain my heart, I should be content it were let blood. . . ." His answers to each particular charge were then read, and he was able to prove those of treachery and corruption untrue, while his exorbitant power was due rather to his two masters' favour than his own ambition. He said he was perfectly willing to be examined on any of the articles, and the King then took advantage of the lull to press his faithful Commons again for a supply. They replied with a Remonstrance, asking for the instant dismissal of the Duke before his trial. The King would not yield to such a direct assault on his authority, and he replied by dissolving Parliament, in June 1626, without the much-needed subsidies.

Hostilities with Spain had died down, but England was now drifting into a war with France. There was more reason for enmity between these two countries than between England and Spain, where war had been caused by the flaring up of Elizabethan traditions. France, under Richelieu, was a fast-growing Power and beginning to

threaten English supremacy at sea. Besides, the mutual promises made when Henrietta Maria married Charles had already been broken by both Governments. Charles, in order to gain popularity in Parliament, had failed to relieve the English Catholics from persecution, while Louis had not co-operated in the attempts to restore the Palatinate to its Elector. Charles still longed to champion the Protestant cause in Europe and rashly attempted to support the Huguenots, in their semi-independent city of La Rochelle, in a rebellion against their King. The dismissal of the Queen's French attendants further incensed Louis, and, though the ambassador he sent to London made peace between Henrietta and her husband, his concessions were disowned when he returned to France. When soon afterwards two hundred English merchant-ships were seized by the French at Bordeaux it seemed to Charles that the English fleet must regain the mastery of the seas before it was too late. Money was raised by forced loans, and on June 27, 1627, Buckingham set sail for La Rochelle, in a last attempt to redeem the Protestant cause, England's honour, the King's power, and his own popularity.

He was nearly successful, in spite of inadequate supplies, undisciplined troops, and the hostility of the nation at large. On July 12 he landed his army on the island of Rhé, which is opposite the city of La Rochelle, and laid siege to the fortified town of St. Martin, where there was a strong French garrison. For two months the besieged held out, but they were on the point of surrender through starvation, when on a dark night with a



favourable wind some light frigates with supplies of food broke through the English fleet and re-victualled the town. This was a terrible blow to Buckingham, as it meant prolonging the siege for at least another month when his own supplies were running short. He had shown himself an excellent commander, energetic, daring, and considerate for the welfare of his men. Now he would have abandoned the island if news had not reached him that reinforcements and food would shortly arrive from England. Throughout September and October he waited desperately for help, his soldiers dwindling daily through the sickness which increased with the advance of autumn, but he waited in vain.

In the meanwhile, Charles was making frenzied efforts to send out an auxiliary fleet. In August he was writing to the Lord Treasurer that "if Buckingham should not now be supplied, not in show, but substantially, having so bravely, and I thank God, successfully, begun his expedition, it were an irrecoverable shame to me, and all this nation; and those that either hinders, or . . . furthers not this action, as much as they may, deserves to make their end at Tyburn or some such place; but I hope better things of you."

Money difficulties caused endless delays in manning and provisioning the ships, and at last, when they were ready to sail, storms drove them back. It was not until November 8 that they finally left the English coast, and then it was too late. Buckingham had been forced, a week earlier, to evacuate Rhé and, to crown the disaster, at least a thousand of his men had been killed in the retreat to the boats. All his courage

and enthusiasm could not avail against the hostility of his own countrymen. The letter from Charles which met him on his arrival at Portsmouth must have consoled him in his humiliation, if anything could.

“ . . . I have sent Montgomery unto thee ; first, to desire thee to bear these misfortunes with that courage thou has showed in all this action and that thou would not make this ill fortune to me irrecoverable by punishing thyself for our faults ; for, by the grace of God, thou and I are young enough to redeem this misfortune, if it were far greater than it is, with much interest ; then, that thou wilt send me speedy good news of thyself, and that thou lookest no more backward upon mischances but forward on noble actions ; so referring myself to Montgomery, I rest,

Your loving, faithful, constant friend,

CHARLES R.”

Unfortunately, Buckingham needed little encouragement to look forward on noble actions. His one idea was to redeem what he considered English honour, nor could Charles easily face the idea of allowing the fleet to rot away, nor of abandoning the Huguenots besieged in La Rochelle. But money was absolutely necessary and again Parliament must be summoned. It met on March 17, 1628, and the King (according to the Venetian Ambassador) spoke “with nerve.” Considering how desperate his condition had become, the defiance he flung at the Commons must have needed it. He told them it was

their duty to grant a supply in this time of national danger, and, if they would not do their duties, then "I must, in discharge of my conscience, use those other means which God hath put into my hands, to save that which the follies of some particular men may hazard to lose. Take not this as a threatening (for I scorn to threaten any but my equals) but an admonition from him that both out of nature and duty, hath most care of your preservation and prosperities."

In reply the Commons offered the King five subsidies, but the price they demanded was his assent to a petition, known as the Petition of Right. The control of the House had for the time passed from Sir John Eliot (who was still prepared to go on ranting indefinitely about the iniquities of Buckingham) to a man with real constructive abilities, Sir Thomas Wentworth, a Yorkshire magnate. Wentworth had no personal animosity against Buckingham, but he had strongly opposed his war policy, even in the days when the leaders of the House had supported it, and rightly believed there could be no hope of peace while the Duke remained supreme. He had suffered imprisonment rather than pay the forced loans raised to prosecute the war, and now thought there must be a clear definition of the respective rights of King and subject in the matter of taxation. He was rare in his generation in concentrating on the needs of the moment instead of harking back to precedents. According to the Petition of Right the King could not claim any taxes except by consent of Parliament, nor could he imprison a subject without showing cause. Charles was very reluctant to pass the Bill as it

made his policy, at least in time of war, dependent on the goodwill of Parliament, but his need for the five subsidies and his determination to save Buckingham, who was again the subject of venomous attacks, induced him to give his assent, but only to find that the Commons, having tasted power, were aspiring to fresh assaults. There were certain Customs duties, known as tunnage and poundage, which were considered part of the King's ordinary income, though they had to be voted afresh to each King by Parliament. At the beginning of Charles's reign they had only been voted for a year, nominally with the intention of re-arranging the rates. In the meanwhile the King had continued to collect them at the ports. Now that the Petition of Right was law the Commons declared that tunnage and poundage were special taxes, and therefore not to be levied without their consent, thus menacing one of the principal sources of the King's income. They also prepared a fresh Remonstrance against Buckingham, the "cause of all evils." Charles, in self-defence, and protesting against their ungracious return for his concessions, prorogued Parliament on June 26. He added that tunnage and poundage could not be forbidden him as if they were special taxes and that in collecting them he was in no way violating the Petition of Right.

The first important event after the adjournment was the elevation of Sir Thomas Wentworth to the House of Lords. By throwing in his lot with the monarchy, Wentworth acted consistently with his beliefs – that a strong Government was necessary to the country, that he had great administrative gifts himself, and that an omnipotent House

of Commons was a greater evil than an omnipotent King. In the last Parliament he had attempted to mediate between Charles and his subjects, but Charles had mistrusted the intentions of this dominating man and rebuffed his overtures. After this set-back, Sir John Eliot and the extremists regained the leadership of the House, men whom Wentworth disliked and despised as impractical demagogues. Recognised at last by Charles as a potential ally, and having accepted a peerage, Wentworth was hated by all the political leaders. To them he seemed the great apostate, the man who for honours had gone over to the enemy, as, in their secret thoughts, they now considered the King.

For the moment, however, a greater sensation drove Wentworth's villainies from the public mind. In August, Buckingham went to Portsmouth to prepare the fleet for a fresh attempt to relieve La Rochelle, which was now closely besieged. Charles preceded him on his journey and stayed at Southwick House, six miles from the town. On the morning of the 24th he was kneeling at family prayers with his host and dependants when an agitated messenger burst into the room and, going straight to the King, whispered in his ear that Buckingham had been murdered. Without moving a muscle, Charles continued his devotions, but when the service was ended he went silently into his own room and there gave himself up to tears and lamentations. For several days his grief mastered him, then he returned to his duties, apparently unchanged, but with infinite bitterness of spirit hidden by an iron self-control. Complete isolation in his grief drove

him still more into himself and estranged him from his subjects. Buckingham had been struck down by a solitary fanatic, but all the nation rejoiced as if the Devil were dead. The murderer confessed that it was the Commons' Remonstrance that had convinced him of the righteousness of his deed. It was Eliot, then, with his slanderous invective, who had really stabbed the Duke, though a disbanded soldier had held the knife. Charles could never forgive Eliot. If Buckingham, in life, had stood between the people and their love for the King, in death he stood between the King and his love for the people.

Buckingham was thirty-six at the time of his death, and in his short life he had known the greatest heights of fortune and depths of failure. He had many merits. "He was in his nature," says Clarendon, "just and candid, liberal, generous, and bountiful, nor was it ever known that the temptation of money swayed him to do an unjust or an unkind thing." His weakness had lain in his too personal approach to politics. His friendships were "as so many marriages for better or worse . . . and it cannot be denied that he was an enemy to the same excess." In international diplomacy he was no match for a dispassionate statesman like Richelieu, while at home he was hopelessly handicapped by the envy roused against a position indiscreetly exalted by the devotion of two masters.

It remained to be seen if the King could be reconciled to the Commons now the "cause of all evils" had been removed. Parliament met in January 1629, and he only asked them to assign him tunnage and poundage, "as my ancestors

have had it." There was a new Lord Treasurer, Weston, and under him an era of peace and retrenchment was being inaugurated at Whitehall. It might have been thought that there was now nothing much to quarrel about, but Eliot was still burning with reforming ardour and turned his energies to religion, a subject always calculated to rouse the majority of the House to frenzy. He attacked some new bishops whose Arminian (or anti-Calvinist) doctrines he declared were favourable to Popery, and he especially denounced a Declaration the King had approved, which laid down that the Church had a right to decree its own ceremonies and interpret its own articles. "Give me leave to say," cried Eliot, "the truth we profess is not men's but God's ; and God forbid that men should be made to judge of that truth." In other words, the bishops were only men, and therefore unfitted to interpret God's truth, but the Members of the House of Commons at that particular moment were not so handicapped. They proceeded to draw up the articles of their faith, which they sent to the King with the demand that all preferments should be given to men of their way of thinking, that there should be henceforward no alterations nor innovations, and that anyone who wrote or spoke contrary to the beliefs of the present Parliamentary majority should be severely punished. On receiving this Declaration, Charles sent a message to the House to adjourn. He had no intention of handing over the Church of England to the bitter enemies of royal and ecclesiastical power. The message was delivered to the Commons on March 2, 1629 ; and Eliot immediately declared that it was the work of

Weston, the new Lord Treasurer, "in whose person all evil is contracted, both for the innovation of religion and invasion of our liberties ; he being the great enemy of the Commonwealth, and I find him building on those grounds, laid by his master, the great Duke." The Speaker again repeated the King's command for an adjournment, but Eliot replied by producing a Remonstrance, pointing out that as the Commons had not been given time to grant the King tunnage and poundage it would be illegal for the King to take it. The Speaker again attempted to rise, but half a dozen members held him in his chair, and swore that he should sit there as long as it pleased them. Then, hearing that the King was sending his sergeant to fetch away the mace, they locked the door, and, the Speaker still refusing to read Eliot's protestation, Eliot's friend Hollis shouted out above the tumult that anyone who should bring in Popery or Arminianism, or should counsel the taking of tunnage and poundage by the King if not granted in Parliament, or any merchant who paid tunnage and poundage, should be accounted a traitor and enemy of the Commonwealth. By this time the King had sent his guards to force open the door of the House, but the members dispersed in time to avoid an open brawl. As a result of their violence, Charles dissolved this Parliament after it had sat only six weeks. He did not call another for eleven years.

The seven ringleaders of the House were arrested and tried for sedition. They were fined and sentenced to make a submission to the King. Four of them yielded and were released, but amongst the recalcitrant three was Eliot. He



would make no confession of delinquency nor promises for future good behaviour and he put all his fortunes into the hands of trustees so that he had nothing wherewith to pay his fine. His courage was equal to his convictions and he remained in the Tower till he died of consumption three years later. He never admitted, even to himself, that he wished to destroy the monarchy, and it would be easier to respect him if he had not paid continual lip-service to the King. Yet of the many men who helped to bring Charles to the block, Eliot, Pym, and Cromwell must share the chief responsibility. Eliot with his wild eloquence and vision of a divinely inspired House of Commons fired his countrymen's imagination ; Pym with the same vision and greater practical ability was to begin the work of destruction ; and Cromwell, the daring tactician, to accomplish it.

## CHAPTER IV

1629 — 1637

Charles's personal rule — the Queen — Weston — Wentworth — Laud.

FROM March 1629 till April 1640 Charles ruled England without help or hindrance from Parliament, and as a King of England he must be judged by what he achieved and failed to achieve in those eleven years. He was severely limited in his practical activities by lack of money, and he was also limited, as every artist must be limited, by the actual material in which he worked — in this case the character and aspirations of the people of England. How capable was he of dealing with them?

Of his own intimate feelings and development at this time we have little exact knowledge. After the death of Buckingham he never found another friend to whom he could pour out his soul, and he now chose his counsellors because he trusted their abilities, not from love. The Queen, in time, took Buckingham's place in his heart, but she had little political influence, nor did she attempt to interfere, except in personal matters or on behalf of her co-religionists. She was seldom separated from her husband during these years of peace and no letters between the two have been preserved, therefore one can only draw conclusions about him from his actions and the observations of eye-witnesses.

It was universally acknowledged that after the death of Buckingham his married life was profoundly happy and that his love for Henrietta Maria became the one great outlet of all his emotions, or, as Clarendon says, "of a very extraordinary alloy ; a composition of conscience, and love and generosity and gratitude and all those noble affections which raise the passion to the greatest height." To add to his devotion, Henrietta, after three years of marriage, became pregnant. She was only eighteen, but already her childlessness had caused some anxiety in England, except among the Puritans, who hoped that the crown would pass to one of the Calvinist Elector Palatine's sons, rather than to the child of a Popish woman. Their hopes were raised in 1629 when the Queen prematurely gave birth to a son who only lived a few hours, but a year later, on May 29, 1630, a big, healthy, ugly boy was born and the continuance of the Stuart line seemed assured. During the next ten years, Charles's dynastic stability was emphasised by the birth of six more children, four of whom survived infancy : Mary, afterwards Princess of Orange ; James, Duke of York ; Elizabeth ; and Henry, Duke of Gloucester.

There is little doubt that Henrietta returned her husband's love, but she probably held a less exalted opinion of his capabilities and character than he of hers. As a pious Catholic, she thought his religious beliefs ridiculous, while, as the daughter of Henry of Navarre, she must have considered his tenacity over matters of conscience unpractical to a dangerous degree.

She looked upon herself as a sensible woman of

the world, and she longed to make her husband more of a man of action and less of a visionary, but it is likely that her foreign blood and upbringing and her worldly superficiality put her more out of touch with the serious English than Charles, in spite of his rigidity. He at least chose counsellors who were clever, devoted, and brave. but her confidants, Holland, Vane, Goring, Lady Carlisle, all proved corrupt intriguers, ready to betray the royal cause at critical moments. They appealed to her by an agreeable manner and a not too lofty tone, but she never realised that her wit and charm would not prevent them deserting her at the promptings of self-interest.

For a time, however, she was happy. In the absence of Parliament, Catholics were no longer severely persecuted, and, without Buckingham, England was no longer at war with half Europe.

Relations with foreign countries could hardly be called satisfactory, but they were not in a state of acute crisis. Charles's principal adviser was now Weston, the Lord Treasurer, who was convinced that the Government could only be carried on if England was at peace and a rigorous economy observed in all departments. Charles consented unwillingly. The business of the Palatinate still weighed heavily on his conscience, and his diplomacy during these years was directed towards the restoration of his sister and her family. But he realised at last that he could not undertake a war without national support, and he had to confine himself to paying his sister a subsidy and trying hopelessly to persuade any of the Powers at the moment fighting in the Protestant cause to

include the restoration of the Elector in their programme. No particular result occurred from these manœuvres except a tentative affiliation with Spain and a gradual estrangement from France. In this atmosphere, the possibility of war was always in Charles's thoughts and he determined to build up the Navy and assure English supremacy at sea. For the next two hundred years, England was to owe her greatness to her Navy. That Charles recognised its importance and acted on it, must be counted as one of his positive achievements, even though the tax called ship-money, specially levied to build the fleet, helped to cause his downfall. In 1634, when the tax was first imposed on seaport towns, it was paid without serious protest, but, when the following year it was extended all over the country, Hampden, a rich Buckinghamshire squire, refused to pay and went to law to defend himself. The question in dispute, whether the King could or could not by ancient precedent levy ship-money without consent of Parliament, was only a sign of a growing discontent amongst the landed classes, as they found that the King with the aid of a few clever lawyers and obedient judges was discovering various ways of raising the permanent income of the Government without recourse to Parliament – and yet keeping within the letter of the law. If he succeeded, by quoting ancient precedents, in recovering for the Crown the property that had been filched from it for the last three hundred years, he might in time become self-supporting and all need for calling a Parliament would disappear. The men who, a few years earlier, had seen power within their grasp

now feared to lose it altogether. Yet Charles knew that his absolutism was only apparent. It was useless to ask Parliament now for money to raise a great Navy. It would have certainly been refused, and there would have followed another ugly scene and another dissolution. Nevertheless, sooner or later during a national emergency, Parliamentary aid must be invoked. He hoped by a wise, resolute rule to make the nation prosperous and so reconcile it to him that in such an emergency it would support him. The three principal instruments he used in his undertaking were Weston, Wentworth, and Laud.

Weston, the Lord Treasurer, was nervous and peevish, and, though the least conspicuous of the three, was universally disliked, even by the King's other Ministers. While cutting down national expenses in every way, he managed to make a comfortable income for himself. Laud and Wentworth despised him and nicknamed him the Lady Mora (the Lady of Delays) in their private correspondence. They accused him of shelving difficulties instead of solving them, and confusing every issue with his hesitations and timidity. Yet he certainly worked hard and not unsuccessfully at his main task of restoring financial stability, and as long as he was in power there was no danger of the King making any violent move or precipitating a crisis. On the other hand, he did nothing to win popularity for the Crown. In truth, his position, apart from his character, must have made popularity impossible, and if he did the monarchy no good he probably did as little harm as could be hoped under the circumstances. When he died in 1635 the difficulty of

finding anyone who was both capable and willing to take on such an unpleasant office induced the King to put the Treasury into commission, till Laud persuaded him to appoint Juxon, Bishop of London, to accept the post. Whatever credit the Government may have gained from Juxon's honesty and amiability was lost by his dependence on Laud and his ecclesiastical office. So, in the financial department at least, Charles had not succeeded in reconciling himself to his people, and the better his finances were organised the more unpopular he became.

Nevertheless, both Weston and Juxon died in their beds, while Charles's other two chief Ministers went to the scaffold, which may be considered a tribute either to their greatness or the reverse, according to one's valuation of the national spirit which destroyed them. Wentworth was a man of outstanding ability, courage, and devotion, as Charles recognised when he made him, in 1628, President of the North (equivalent to Lord Lieutenant of a third of England) and, in 1632, Lord Deputy of Ireland. The former office, as conscientiously performed by Wentworth, was bound to raise enmity amongst the other great landlords, each demanding to be a little king in his own part of the world. They found themselves ruled by a man who allowed no one to defy King Charles's deputy, and who would always protect the poor and weak against the rich and strong. But the troubles in the North were trifles compared to the confusion that reigned in Ireland when he arrived in Dublin in 1633. Nominally the country was completely under the rule of England, paying Customs to the

Crown, the English Church established everywhere, Catholicism proscribed, while plantations of English colonists were busy introducing civilisation and prosperity. Actually the native Irish still acknowledged their local chiefs as their real leaders, the persecution of Catholicism did not prevent nine-tenths of the population from openly professing that religion, and the seething discontent of those who had been driven out of their lands necessitated the presence of a costly standing army. The Protestant Church, far from making converts, was a prey to English adventurers, such as the great Earl of Cork, who snapped up the tithes, which should have supported the clergy, for the aggrandisement of his own family. The savage wars of conquest in Elizabeth's reign had left the country poverty-stricken and desolate, while the average Englishman looked on it simply as a possible source of profit for enterprising individuals who might in time hope to extirpate the Irish religion and customs, and finally the natives themselves.

Out of this unpromising material, Wentworth attempted to create a prosperous, contented province, a source of strength to the English Crown and Church. He held the typical views of his compatriots that the Irish must be anglicised and converted to Protestantism before they could be civilised, but in his methods he differed widely from his contemporaries, making deadly enemies both in England and amongst the richer settlers in Ireland. In his eyes, Protestantism should be spread, not only by ill-treating Catholics, but by raising the status of the Protestant Church. With this end in view he fought relentlessly and success-



fully against the great men who had seized Church endowments. He repaired the ruined churches and the ruined stipends and chose devout and learned bishops. He determined that the country should know internal peace and stability, and he saw that this was impossible as long as it remained a Tom Tiddler's ground for needy courtiers and adventurers. He protested strongly against the fashion of paying English officials with Irish lands and money, he cleared the Irish seas of pirates, he started the flax industry, and he trained a really efficient army of 10,000 men, the only army the King could command in the United Kingdom. Under his rule official corruption was severely dealt with, Customs dues more than doubled, and Ireland, instead of being an expense to England, was actually sending in yearly increasing sums to the Exchequer. Wentworth, after three years of strenuous government, came to England to defend his policy to the King and excuse himself from the many accusations of tyranny levelled against him. Charles supported him in all and against all. Yet Wentworth returned to Dublin depressed and full of foreboding. He knew that he had roused powerful hatreds in Ireland among the magnates whose power he had bridled, and in England among the courtiers whose grants he had stopped, and he feared (as he wrote to the King) "the dark setting of a storm." He longed for some honour as a mark of Charles's support, but Charles did not like to have his favours demanded; he considered his open championship of the Deputy encouragement enough. The tragedy in these two men's relationship was that they did not really trust each other.

Wentworth was prepared to pay infinite reverence to the kingly office ; indeed, his life was devoted to the service of the Crown ; but his pride could not easily support any man's command, and he even sometimes used his official position to override the King's wishes. He feared that, in a crisis, Charles would desert him, and he was naturally too emotional and passionate to hide his fears. This obvious distrust augured badly for the future. Charles admired his abilities and followed his advice, but he could not love this powerful, intense, ugly man, and it was only love that could turn the scale if Wentworth's life should hang in the balance. His attitude to the King was in complete contrast to Buckingham's. The latter had treated Charles with the easy familiarity of a friend, but had obeyed him like a slave. Wentworth, while prostrating himself before the throne, allowed very little interference from the man on it. Therefore, though he longed to win the King's affection, he had to be content with his approbation and the apparent success of his own government in Ireland.

One friend he had at the English Court to whom he could pour out his hopes and disappointments, William Laud, since 1633 Archbishop of Canterbury. Laud was sixty when he reached supreme power, and his upward path had been beset with difficulties. He was the son of a Reading tradesman and had made his own way by scholarships and hard work. His anti-Calvinistic views had been unacceptable to the last Archbishop, Abbot ; but, on Charles's accession, fortune at last seemed to smile on him. His religious opinions coincided with the King's, who

at once made him Bishop of London, and increasingly relied on him in politics as well. Laud first became intimate with Wentworth after the dissolution of Parliament in 1629 when they met in the Privy Council, and, in spite of differences of birth and character, recognised mutually congenial ends and methods. They both believed in going "thorough" with anything they undertook, regarding all temporisers and Worldly Wisemen as enemies of the nation. They were both incorruptible, hard-working, sincere, and incapable of concealing their anger or ingratiating themselves by pleasant speeches. They were both men with a mission: the one bent on civilising Ireland by means of his vice-regal power, for the honour and profit of King and country; the other on civilising England by the ecclesiastical arm, for the glory of God and the Church. And while they went bravely on their uncompromising ways, both had forebodings of evil, fully realising that dangerous enemies surrounded them. Laud's depression, in particular, almost amounted to persecution mania. Already old when he attained high office, his humble birth and long years of poverty had not encouraged self-confidence, and he was the butt of innumerable scurrilous lampoons and threatening letters from the more violent Puritans. In his diary he noted his ominous dreams and continually feared that the King might turn against him. Yet it was this nervous, simple little man who was attempting to restore the Church in England to its pre-Reformation grandeur and power, to use its ritual and beauty as a civilising instrument in every parish, its ministers to control rich laymen

instead of being controlled by them, and to make good works rather than dogma the subject of sermons. Naturally he met with violent opposition from various quarters. The Calvinists looked upon him as a Papist, the anti-clericals dreaded the restoration of clerical power, the aristocrats and democrats saw in the alliance between King and Church a danger to their own aspirations ; the average pugnacious, individualistic Englishman bitterly resented this general centralisation of government, wanting to be left alone to fight out his religious beliefs and impose them on his poorer neighbours. But Laud was possessed of a restless energy, and nobody was left alone. His deputies visited every parish in England with instructions to suppress heresy and disorder, to enforce the repair of buildings, more reverent behaviour in congregations and clergymen, and the general use of the Anglican liturgy. Those who refused to conform were heavily fined, and his name became notorious for severity and bigotry. Yet his aims were more humane than his opponents'. He continually set his face against the introduction of the Puritan Sabbath which was fast becoming a menace to the general happiness and has darkened the life of England for so many hundred years. For example, he would not allow local justices to suppress the Somersetshire wakes, and supported the King in the re-issue of his father's Declaration in favour of Sunday sports, newly ordered to be read from every pulpit. His influence did much for the restoration and adornment of innumerable churches which before his advent had been unspeakably squalid, and he was a generous

benefactor to Oxford University, where he rebuilt St. John's College and gave his great collection of Hebrew and Arabic books to the Bodleian Library. His name might be remembered with more gratitude if he had been able to suppress, instead of merely irritating by persecution, the numerous popular preachers and writers whose tediousness was only relieved by their indecency. But in attempting to stem that murky flood he had found a task beyond his powers. There was no yellow Press in those days for the delectation of the semi-educated, who instead fed their imaginations on long sermons and tracts in which Biblical phraseology covered those in high places with a torrent of invective. From printer and conventicle poured forth a stream of propaganda which Laud and Charles were quite incapable of confuting in its own style. Besides, the propaganda gave the people just what they wanted to hear — that God was the God of certain individuals who believed themselves to be the elect, that such individuals were worthy of riches and power, that everyone who opposed them was an Amalekite or Jebusite to be utterly destroyed, whereupon the rule of the Saints would begin. Compared with these lurid pictures, the King, Laud, and Wentworth, with their ideals of national unity in religion and in government, were far too rational and too democratic for the spirit of the age, which sought self-expression in violent inequalities, local patriotism, and religious fanaticism. The spirit of the age triumphed, as was inevitable, yet there are some failures which leave a finer legacy than success, and if the King and his chief Ministers had been more in tune with their contemporaries

they might have given less cause for gratitude to the nation that destroyed them.

What does the English civilisation of to-day owe to Charles, Wentworth, and Laud? To Charles it owes the foundations of its naval greatness and of its overseas trade, built up during those eleven years of personal rule when the rest of Europe was at war. Through his enlightened patronage of architecture and painting the public taste became more civilised. Throughout the country the influence of his high conscientiousness and perfect marriage raised the standards both of public and private life. There are innumerable family letters of the period showing an affection between husbands and wives which is only equalled by the Victorians, though there were no Victorian ideals of sheltered helpless women to hinder their freedom and intimacy. During this reign there is a quality of thought and action which may be called nobility and which England has hardly witnessed so clearly since. This is as much a national heritage as laws and empires, and it is this quality, if one of his followers judges him truly, which was expressed in King Charles's words and deeds. "He resembled," says Sir Philip Warwick, "Seneca's refined rational man; one that forfeited with the vulgar (or the many mistaking and deceived narrow minds) the repute of being a good man that he might not lose to himself the conscience of being such a one. . . . Providence made him glorious; great and good minds will honour him; ignorant not discern him; politick (who think a kingdom should never be lost upon scruples) not value him; but God, I am assured, hath pardoned his

failures and crowned him for his piety and sufferings."

As for Laud, though his policy raised so much execration and helped to destroy his master, his work has proved more lasting than he may have expected. He saved the English Church from Calvinistic tyranny, and his detested innovations in ritual and the liturgy have lasted from the Restoration of 1660 till the present day. Where he failed, and where possibly no one could succeed, was in attempting to give the English Church unity, and he was too much the child of his age to tolerate the idea of licensed Nonconformity. He was a martyr to his conception of a truly Anglican Church, and it must be admitted that the seed which was watered with his blood has grown into an essentially national tree.

Of all Charles's counsellors, Wentworth might be said to have failed most completely in his projects. His work was undone directly he was dead, and Ireland was once more torn by rebellion, rapine, and desolation. Even if he had lived and his policy had been continued over a long term of years, it is unlikely that he would ever have anglicised or proselytised the Irish people. Yet his rule had been more enlightened than any Englishman's till the end of the nineteenth century. If it had been pursued, the two countries might still in time have separated, but the parting might have been peacefully accomplished without the memories of three hundred years of exploitation and injustice to embitter future relations.

But all these developments were hidden from the King and his subjects in 1637. What mattered at that time was a dangerous discontent among

the bolder English spirits seething against the innovations in religion and the innovations in taxation, with no outlet in Parliament, nor in foreign warfare, yet which must find one somehow. The country was like a bomb which would explode wherever it was touched. Charles and Laud chose to touch the Scottish section, with the result that the whole fabric they had been carefully raising was utterly destroyed.

The King and his counsellors never realised that a Government cannot be carried on without at least the tacit support of a large party – it need not be a majority – among the governed. One powerful class must feel that its interests are primarily considered, its aspirations expressed, its approbation desired. Charles had attempted by wise and equable rule to win the support of all classes alike, and in consequence had alienated them all. Men can do without wisdom, even without justice, but the strong must have means of self-expression ; and most need affection, even if it be only the affection of an actor for his audience. Elizabeth had been a great actress, and as such she had loved her people and been beloved of them. The King's government failed because he would not put himself at the head of any one party ; he owed his personal isolation at the time of crisis to his melancholy and misanthropy. He could love individuals, but he could not love the people as a whole, nor had he those high spirits and easy manners which concealed the far deeper misanthropy of his son, Charles II. The charm which won him so many sympathisers during his troubles and humiliations sprang from certain moral qualities such as magnanimity and patience,



not from any flattering simulation of good-fellowship or sympathy with his opponents. For good or evil, Charles I was incapable of simulation, and his attempts at dissimulation were always ineffective.

## CHAPTER V

AUG. 1637 — Nov. 1640

The Church in Scotland — the Covenant — Pacification of Berwick — Short Parliament — rout of Newburn.

CHARLES had visited his kingdom of Scotland only once since his early childhood, in 1633, when he had gone thither to be crowned. On that occasion he had taken Laud with him and both had noted how weak a hold the Episcopal Church had on the Scotch and in what a squalid condition the churches were kept. What they had not noted was the immensely strong hold of Calvinism on the popular imagination, nor that its disciples steadfastly believed that they had inherited the Jewish prerogative of being God's Chosen People. There were various reasons why such a belief should find favour with the Scotch. They were at that time very much isolated from other nations through the remoteness and poverty of their country. Their principal contact with the rest of Europe was as soldiers of fortune, in which capacity they acquired useful experience for home troubles, but were not subject to any humanising influences. There is, besides, in the northern parts of Great Britain, but especially in Scotland, a general competence in achieving any given aim, and a general contempt for anything outside that aim, which together breed complacency and spiritual isolation. Add a strong belief in the Devil and witchcraft and a very thin veneer of

Christianity, and it will be seen what formidable passions anyone would stir up who attempted to dissolve the existing unity by adding other ingredients. This is what Charles, with Laud's help, wanted to bring about. The present balance of power in Scotland was distasteful to them both. The authority of the Crown was hated by the nobles, mostly violent, ambitious men, each ruling his own clan and warring against one another. The Church was largely under lay control, and though some of the poorer inhabitants might be loyal to their Stuart King the real authority lay with the nobles and the Calvinist clergy. Charles determined to establish the Anglican Church more firmly and thus create a party in sympathy with his own ideas which would counterbalance the aristocracy and, he hoped, have a civilising influence on the whole country. As a beginning, he commanded that the English Prayer Book should be used throughout the country. At once he provoked the two strongest emotions of the Scotch: their national pride, which resented interference from Whitehall or Lambeth; and their hatred of Popery, by which name they included any Christian religion with roots in the past. To the true Calvinist, religion had been non-existent between the first Apostles and the Reformation, while the Anglican view that Protestantism should be a purified version of the Catholic Church was anathema to men who spoke of that Church as the Whore of Babylon. As the members of a Communist State would view the introduction of Liberal propaganda in the Press, so the Scotch nation viewed the introduction of ritual and liturgy into their churches as tending

to undermine the belief that they were the Chosen People, escaped out of the land of Egypt – with John Knox as their Moses.

Therefore, when in August 1637 a complaisant Dean started to read the order of Morning Prayer in St. Giles's Cathedral, Edinburgh, a riot broke out, stools were thrown at his head, and he barely escaped with his life. Throughout the country, sympathy was on the side of the rioters, and the King's commands were everywhere defied. Charles had no wish to provoke a rebellion, but he felt that if he gave way on this point the government of Scotland would pass for ever to the nobles, who had seized the opportunity to consolidate their power by siding with the insurgents against King and bishops. In March 1638 they drew up a Covenant, asserting their determination to live and die in defence of their religion and liberties. It was eagerly signed by thousands in every class. Charles tried vainly, with the aid of his friend and principal Scottish adviser, the Duke of Hamilton, to make a party in Scotland. Hamilton was timid and shifty and wanted to stand well with both sides, while most of those who might have supported the King were terrified by the Covenanting party. By the spring of 1639 the only course that seemed possible to Charles was an appeal to his English subjects to take up arms against their ancient enemies. He met with little encouragement, but with few obvious signs that a large party in England had temporarily lost sight of their hostility to the Scotch in their greater hostility to his ecclesiastical and civil policy. However, an army was collected and marched north to Berwick, but the Scotch had a

much better one, whose officers had been trained in the Continental wars and whose soldiers were filled with enthusiasm for the cause. The English officers were amateurish, the soldiers undisciplined, and there was not enough money to pay or feed them properly. Hopelessly over-matched, therefore, Charles felt obliged to treat with the enemy, and in June 1639 a "pacification" was signed between the two parties, before a blow had been struck. Neither side made any attempt to keep the terms of the treaty and both only thought of it as a truce, to last till each was in a better position to establish its authority in Scotland.

That autumn Wentworth arrived in England. He had left Ireland apparently prosperous and orderly and was certain that strong measures would produce an equally satisfactory result in Scotland, where the leaders showed less and less intention of obeying the King and war again seemed inevitable. Yet, if the English were not to be hopelessly humiliated, some means of raising money beyond the ordinary revenue must be found. The King could only just carry on in time of peace – in a war he was helpless. Then it was that Wentworth proposed that a Parliament should be called as the oldest and most popular method of obtaining supplies. He had always been able to manage the Irish Parliaments and he thought that the fear of a Scottish invasion must rouse all Englishmen in support of their King. He had long been out of touch with English affairs and never guessed that the leading men who were to sit in the new Parliament might welcome the rebel army as a support in their

coming struggle for supremacy. Charles at last trusted Wentworth absolutely and showed his confidence by creating him Earl of Strafford in January 1640. As long as he was in England he dominated the council board, and even the Court intrigues against him were, for the moment, silenced. He returned to Dublin in March to open the Irish Parliament, which cheerfully voted four subsidies for the war, and he then, in spite of a dangerous illness, hurried back to England, where the new House of Commons was already proving recalcitrant.

This body, known as the Short Parliament, met on April 13, 1640. Most of the Members were young and inexperienced, so the lead naturally fell to John Pym, one of the few who had sat in the Commons several times already and who had had plenty of time to think things over since the dissolution of 1629. Except towards Papists, he had hitherto appeared as a moderate, and now he made a very long, moderately worded speech on grievances, declaring the illegality of ship-money, monopolies, coat- and conduct-money (a method of raising money for clothing troops), tunnage and poundage – in fact, all the ways the King had tried for carrying on the Government without calling Parliament. He concluded by saying that the intermission of Parliament was the greatest national grievance. The speech was much applauded, but it was the opening sentence that expressed his whole political creed. He said that Parliament (by which he meant the House of Commons) was the soul of the body politic. This had been Eliot's belief, but Eliot had been too violent to establish it as a sober truth, even

among most of his fellow Members. Now Pym, cautious, a born manager of men, tenacious and unscrupulous, inculcated his doctrine, not only into the Lower House, where it was naturally well received, but into a large part of the nation as well. Under his guidance and with the aid of his friends, Hampden and St. John, the Commons refused to consider the granting of subsidies till the King acknowledged that the direction of policy and power of the purse was indubitably theirs. In vain Charles tried to rouse them with the sight of a letter the Scotch Covenanters had sent to the King of France asking his intervention on their behalf. The political leaders were already in league with the Scotch and were not going to listen to anything to their disadvantage. It came to the King's ears one evening that they were about to propose a motion condemning the whole war. Charles determined to prevent an open defiance and hastily dissolved this Parliament early next morning before any business had been done. It had only sat three weeks and moderate men were dismayed at the open friction now inevitable between King and people. The extremists were delighted. "Things must be worse before they are better," said St. John, his usually gloomy face wreathed in smiles. "That Parliament would never have done what needed to be done."

It remained for the King to carry on the war as best he might, without supplies. The Earl of Northumberland, who was supposed to be in command of the English army at Newcastle, fell ill, and in any case felt small enthusiasm for his post. The training of the army was next given

to Lord Conway, who was also infected by the general pessimism. "I am teaching cart-horses to *manège*," he wrote, "and making men that are fit for Bedlam and Bridewell to keep the Ten Commandments ; so General Lesley and I keep two schools ; he has scholars that profess to serve God and he is instructing them how they may safely do injury and all impiety ; mine to the utmost of their power never kept any law either of God or the King and they are to be made fit to make others keep them."

On August 20 the King left London for York. The same evening 25,000 Scotch soldiers crossed the Tweed. Conway was in despair at the wretched quantity and quality of his men. The shortage of money was an insuperable difficulty to raising or training the troops, and when the two armies met at Newburn on the 28th the raw English levies broke down and fled to Darlington. Here Strafford, whose coming from London had been delayed by illness, found Conway, and here he wrote to his friend, Sir George Radcliffe : "Pity me, for never came man to so lost a business. The army altogether necessitous . . . our horse all cowardly ; the country from Berwick to York in the power of the Scots . . . a general disaffection to the King's service, none sensible of his dishonour. . . . God of His goodness deliver me out of this, the greatest evil of my life."

Charles, at York, where his presence had caused a revival of loyalty, was less despondent. The trained bands of the northern counties were coming to his aid ; and Strafford, as he saw these promising soldiers, recovered his hopes and thought that all would yet be well if only money



could be raised to pay them. But in the City of London, whence supplies must come, there was no revival of loyalty. Petitions, one composed anonymously by Pym, were sent to York and scattered throughout the country, demanding a Parliament in which the King's "evil counsellors" would be brought to justice. Conway's rout was greeted with joy by the merchants and political leaders. Yet Charles still hoped. In spite of his natural melancholy he was always possessed by a strange optimism in emergencies, partly due to his confidence in the justice of his cause, partly due to his excellent health, and partly to a patient stolidity, the result of long practice in self-control. He summoned a Council of Peers to York, trusting that they would find a way out. But they only advised another Parliament. They, like the Commons, had suffered from lack of power during the eleven years of Charles's personal government and many of them were in league with the leaders of the Lower House who at this time valued their support. Strafford noticed a tendency on the part of his fellow Peers to throw all responsibility for the war on his shoulders and knew that, when Parliament met, only the King would stand between him and ruin. He might have been comparatively safe in Yorkshire at the head of the army, but two of his enemies, Hamilton and Vane, managed to persuade the King that his advice would be indispensable at Whitehall, where Charles was only too anxious to have his devoted Councillor by his side. A promise was given that, if he came, he should not suffer in "person, honour, or fortune." The Queen likewise appealed to him. Though

for many years his bitter enemy, she at last recognised his loyalty and ability and assured him of her friendship. Strafford saw clearly enough how little protection such promises would afford, yet he did not hesitate and, on November 5, 1640, two days after the opening of Parliament, he wrote from his country house to George Radcliffe : " I am to-morrow to London, with more dangers beset, I believe, than ever any man went with out of Yorkshire. Yet my heart is good and I find nothing cold within me. It is not to be believed how great the malice is and how intent they are about it ; little less care there is taken to ruin me than to save their own souls. . . ."

The majority of Englishmen and Scotchmen looked upon these tasks as synonymous, but they hoped by Strafford's ruin to save their bodies as well as their souls.

## CHAPTER VI

Nov. 1640 — AUG. 1642

Long Parliament meets — trial and execution of Strafford — Irish rebellion — Grand Remonstrance — the five Members — King goes to York — outbreak of war.

WHEN Parliament met on November 3, 1640, Pym and his little knot of supporters had determined on their policy. So good an opportunity must not be lost for transferring every source of power in the nation from the King to the House of Commons. The Privy Council, Church, Navy, Militia, finance and law must in future be under Parliamentary control and the King reduced to a figurehead. The bulk of the members of both Houses and a large party in the country were prepared to back Pym in all his immediate plans, yet he knew this would hardly be the case if he allowed his ultimate aims to appear. Therefore he presented his revolutionary programme as a defence of the fundamental liberties of Englishmen. In this guise it found universal support among landowners, merchants, and lawyers, both in and out of Parliament. By liberty they understood a general decrease in central authority, with the curb it set on individual development. The gentry and merchants looked forward to lower taxation, fewer regulations in trade, and the destruction of clerical power. The lawyers' hopes lay in the abolition of all the extra-judicial courts, ecclesiastical and local, which offended their guild feeling and took the bread out of their mouths.

Pym's idea of liberty was very different and perfectly sincere, though he was too good a tactician to enlighten his supporters as long as he could bamboozle them. He knew that taxation would be as necessary in an aristocracy as in a monarchy, and he had no intention of introducing religious toleration or encouraging free speech. He believed that his party would govern more efficiently than the King, and that it was more representative of national aspirations and opinions. To achieve its supremacy he was prepared to use any weapons that came to hand, and in November 1640 his armoury seemed inexhaustible and irresistible.

For one thing, the King's reputation had fallen very low. The triumph of the Scotch, though largely due to the refusal of Parliament to vote supplies, had left an impression of failure and mismanagement on the part of the Government which reason could not dispel. The Scotch army was still camped in the north of England as the allies of the City and Parliament, at a retaining fee of £850 a day, and it could be let loose if the King dissolved Parliament or attempted to bring force to bear on it. The Scotch preachers were already let loose in London, and their eloquence was daily inflaming the crowd against the King's counselors, especially Laud and Strafford. And now appeared one of Pym's best weapons, one that he knew how to use perfectly, the weapon of propaganda to inspire terror into an assembly or a crowd. Terror will make men suspect a dangerous plot in every intrigue, an assassin in every political opponent, and drives them to deeds of cruelty and injustice which at the time seem the merest

necessity of self-preservation. This weapon and the mood it creates have yet another effect which Pym could turn to account, the terror of the minority at being exposed to the fury of the majority, to imprisonment, fines, perhaps death. This man, by means of the Press, the pulpit, and the House of Commons, could raise a mob to howl outside Parliament or Whitehall demanding the blood of his enemies, and so frighten his fellow Members that they would vote as he wished. Pym had three phrases which he used effectively in all emergencies for intimidating the King, confusing the issue, and creating an atmosphere of danger. These were: "privileges of Parliament"; "evil counsellors," which really meant any supporter of Charles; and "fears and jealousies," which perfectly described the mood of the House of Commons.

Nevertheless, all these assets might turn to liabilities if not used quickly. The Scotch could be relied on as long as they were paid regularly and on the understanding that Presbyterianism was to be forcibly established in England and Episcopacy extirpated. Yet the taxes necessary to pay them would in the long run alienate that party whose antagonism to the King had been largely due to financial discontent. Then the establishment of Presbyterianism would soon be recognised by the anti-clericals as nothing but a change of masters. Pym himself, though of Calvinist sympathies, was more anxious to establish Parliamentary control over the Church than to alter its dogma or ritual. Therefore it behoved him to win his struggle with the King before the English grew tired of their expensive allies, or the Commons by religious divisions imperilled their

unity and forfeited popular esteem. "Evil counsellors" might even make a party if they were not quickly despatched. All these considerations prompted Pym and his allies towards the destruction of one man, Strafford, the prince of evil counsellors, the only strong brain and will devoted to the King, the former leader of the House of Commons, who might yet regain its favour, if given time. Though his ruin was already decided, it was with alarm that his enemies heard he was in London, a week after the opening of Parliament. They had hoped for several weeks to prepare his impeachment, but now that he was already with the King a rumour spread that he meant to forestall them in the charge of high treason. On November 11, the day after his arrival, a secret messenger from the Commons came to him at Whitehall with the news that a committee of Members were on their way to the Lords to demand his arrest. It was no longer possible to attempt a counter-stroke, and Strafford, too proud to fly, and secure in the sense of his own innocence, went at once to face his accusers. He found Pym already on the scene, and was forced to withdraw while the Lords considered the charge. When he was called in he was made to kneel and hear their decision to send him to the Tower to await his trial for high treason.

The next three months were a busy time for Pym and his friends. They had to draw up the articles of accusation against Strafford, and draw them up in such a way that he could not escape the death-penalty. They also impeached Laud,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> But his trial was delayed till the autumn of 1644. He was executed in January 1645.

the judges who had supported ship-money, and Strafford's friend, Sir George Radcliffe, who might otherwise have given evidence in his favour. When the articles were prepared they were published without Strafford's answer, so that throughout England they were not only unquestioned, but men saw him as the embodiment of oppression, corruption, and treachery, the immediate impediment to peace and progress. Nevertheless, when on March 22, 1641, the trial opened in Westminster Hall, Black Tom Tyrant, as the crowd called him, was still confident that he could prove his innocence. The Lords for the most part were hostile, having suffered from his arrogance, and, besides, his incorruptibility and single devotion to the King had cut across various ambitious designs. Yet so many of the charges against him were proved false, and even if true would not amount to high treason, and he defended himself with such skill and courage, that public opinion began to veer round in his favour. Pym saw his case in danger and knew that Strafford tried and acquitted would be infinitely more powerful than before. The sublime vision of a supreme House of Commons was threatened with dissolution unless the Great Apostate could be attacked in another way. Such a way was by Bill of Attainder, that is, by a Bill condemning Strafford to death which had to pass the Commons and the Lords and be signed by the King. It involved no trial, no chance for the prisoner to defend himself; everything depended on the eloquence with which the case was presented against him, on knowledge of the psychology of crowds. Here Pym was in his element, and,

moreover, when the Bill was read in the House of Commons he managed to produce fresh evidence which went far to decide the issue. One of the Secretaries of State, Sir Harry Vane, had made notes at the King's secret council-table, and these Pym now read to the Commons. Strafford was represented as saying to the King, "You have an army in Ireland to subdue this kingdom." Though the Scotch war was under discussion at the time and Strafford was plainly referring to Scotland as "this kingdom," Pym succeeded in assuring his listeners that England was intended. Vane had a petty personal grudge against Strafford and was too vindictive to acquit him of the damning accusation of wishing to conquer England with an Irish army. Pym saw to it that the atmosphere did not cool before the day for voting arrived. On that day, April 21, two hundred and thirty members were absent, fearing to vote against Pym and equally fearing to vote against their consciences. One young man, Lord Digby, daringly made a passionate speech in Strafford's defence. "Let every man lay his hand upon his heart and sadly consider what we are going to do with a breath, justice or murder. . . . Let every man purge his heart of all passions. . . . Away with personal animosities, away with all flatteries to the people, away with all fears, away with all such considerations, as that it is not fit for a Parliament, that one accused by it of treason should escape with life." But there were few present who could away with all these considerations. Fifty-nine members voted against the Bill of Attainder and two hundred and four in its favour, less than half the House if all had been present.



There still remained the Lords and the King between Strafford and death. The former would probably have acquitted him had the original trial continued, but new and hostile elements were at work. Pym's propaganda had had its effect in the City. A monster petition demanding Strafford's death was presented to the Lords by 2,000 citizens, while the names of the fifty-nine in the Commons who had voted against the Bill of Attainder were posted up about Westminster with the title - "Straffordians, betrayers of their country." When the Bill was presented in the Lords the Solicitor-General, St. John, declared that no evidence was necessary if each man felt in his own mind that Strafford was guilty. For a while it seemed as if his friends might form a party in the House, but popular fears had infected them too, and the others were at the mercy of every rumour. They feared Pym; they feared the crowds who gathered, hooting, round their coaches demanding which way they were going to vote; they feared the living Strafford, even in the Tower. "Stone-dead hath no fellow," said the Earl of Essex. They feared the English army still encamped in the North, whose officers the Queen was trying to persuade to come to Strafford's rescue, and they longed to escape their responsibility. On the day they voted, only a third of their number took their seats and, of these, eleven only were for saving Strafford's life. There remained the King. On Saturday, May 9, he received the Bill, and all the next day he wrestled in an agony of indecision. Outside the palace the mob howled for the blood of Strafford and of all Papists and traitors. At any moment they might

break in and murder the Queen and her children. When Buckingham's life had been at stake, Charles had not hesitated to risk everything rather than desert his friend. Then love and duty had pointed the same way, but now Buckingham's place in Charles's heart had been taken by the Queen. The bishops and the Peers told him that it was his duty to give up this man, for the peace of the country, to avoid civil war. Strafford himself had written a letter absolving the King from his promise of protection. Plots to raise the Army had been betrayed ; the Governor of the Tower hated Strafford and would have killed him with his own hand ; there was no help anywhere. Yet it was love, and the fear born of love, which turned the scale and brought Charles to a degradation he never knew before or afterwards. On the Sunday evening he made what he later called that " base, sinful concession " to expediency, to the iniquity of the times. He signed the warrant with tears in his eyes. " The Earl of Strafford's condition," he said, " is more fortunate than mine."

Strafford was to die on the following Wednesday. On Tuesday the King made one last effort to save him. He sent his son, the Prince of Wales, now eleven years old, with an appeal to the Lords that the sentence might be changed to perpetual imprisonment. It was disregarded. Already the future Charles II was receiving a painful lesson in statecraft.

On Wednesday, May 12, Stratford left his prison in the Tower for the public scaffold on Tower Hill. The Governor feared that in their frenzy the immense crowds might tear the prisoner to pieces and begged him to take a coach.

“No, I dare look death in the face, and I hope the people too.” Almost alone in England, he was free from fear. He marched among his guards like a general at the head of an army, and for the moment his enemies were silent. On the scaffold he reasserted his devotion to his Faith, his King, and his country’s welfare, and then, with a sentence, cast a doubt on the vision of a golden age which the people believed would begin with his death. “Consider seriously whether the beginnings of the people’s happiness should be written in letters of blood. I fear they are in a wrong way ; I desire Almighty God, that no one drop of my blood shall rise up in judgment against them.”

When his head was held up, a mighty cheer rose from the crowd. Horsemen galloped off to the country, shouting wildly, “His head is off! His head is off!” Everywhere bonfires were lighted and houses illuminated, while windows left dark were smashed by the angry mob. Yet they had little cause to rejoice. Yielding to panic and inflamed by political leaders themselves panic-stricken, the people of England had assisted at the legal murder of an incorruptible statesman, a devoted patriot, whom Richelieu called the wisest man in England, and of whom Archbishop Ussher said that he had never known a whiter soul. The words on the scaffold proved a true prophecy. Little more than a year after Strafford’s death the country was embroiled in civil war and for nearly eighteen years enjoyed neither peace nor prosperity. But, of all the thousands who shared that guilt and its terrible consequences, Charles alone admitted his responsibility

and considered his own violent death a just expiation. He alone repented and he alone has never been forgiven by posterity.

For the next few months, Pym and his supporters carried all before them. The King's spirit was crushed and he passed whatever Bills were presented to him. All the courts where his deputies had administered justice were abolished, all his methods of raising money were declared illegal, and he even consented to a revolutionary measure which ordained that Parliament could not be dissolved without its own consent. All these moves could be acclaimed in the name of liberty, but when the political leaders attempted to remould the English Church a new tyranny became apparent to the more civilised patriots ; the beginnings of a reaction took shape. A Bill brought into the House of Commons in June, to destroy the hierarchy root and branch and establish some kind of Presbyterian Church under lay control, met with considerable opposition. At last the King found allies in the House who saw him as a truer leader of their cultivated humanism than the provincial fanatics who grasped insatiably at every national influence. Was it possible that these reformers were leading, not to a golden age of liberty, but to a tyranny of barbarians and bores ?

As the summer went on, the King's spirits revived. He decided to go to Scotland and see if he could secure a party there. Following a treaty between the Scotch and the English Parliament the two armies were disbanding. Now that the Scotch army was no longer in the Parliamentary pay the alliance showed signs of strain. The

Marquess of Montrose was trying to unite Royalist Presbyterians in opposition to his great enemy, the Marquess of Argyll, the lay representative of the Covenanters. The House of Commons did their best to prevent Charles's journey. In spite of all their triumphs, Pym still felt insecure as long as the King had anywhere to turn, any possible allies. The only hope for the permanent establishment of Parliamentary supremacy was to keep him more or less a prisoner at Whitehall, cut off from his people. On this occasion, however, there was no cause for alarm. Charles got away to Scotland in August, but Argyll had managed to imprison Montrose, and keep his own grip on affairs. The King returned in November, after three months of rebuffs and humiliation. Except for several Watch Committees, one of which had followed him to Scotland, Parliament had adjourned during his absence, but it met on October 20, a month before his return. Pym, feeling the unity of the House insecure and its popularity on the wane in the country, determined to restore both by drawing up a declaration to be passed by the Commons enumerating all their past achievements and all the King's misdeeds since the beginning of the reign, and containing a warning of the dangers which still beset their country from Popery and tyrannical designs. It was called the Grand Remonstrance and differed from other remonstrances in that, though it was nominally addressed to the King, it was really an appeal to the people against him. Its originators received unexpected encouragement from a serious rebellion that broke out in Ireland at the beginning of November.

The motives behind this outbreak were partly nationalistic (the native Irish hoped to recover the lands which had been seized and planted by English settlers a generation earlier), and partly religious – to restore Catholicism. It was given an impetus by the anarchy following Strafford's death. His army had been disbanded, there was no one to control adventurers and exploiters, and the powers in England were threatening a renewed persecution of Catholics. Several thousand English were driven from their homes and were either murdered or died of exposure. Dublin was, however, saved, and once the Protestants had recovered from their first terror they saw that the incident might turn to their advantage as it would furnish a pretext of seizing more Irish lands. The Dublin Lord Chief Justices almost drove the Anglo-Irish Catholics into rebellion to incriminate them for the benefit of Protestant settlers. In England the political leaders threw the blame on the King, whose Popish wife and toleration of Popery had, according to them, brought about this disaster. They hoped to discredit him finally and were determined that he should have no control over the army that must be raised to deal with the rebels. It was easy to find speculators ready to lend money or to raise a troop of horse with the hope of repayment in forfeited lands, but if the King were allowed to choose the commanding officers the whole army might be useful to him later on. Therefore, though there was a great deal of discussion and the national hatred of the Irish and Popery still further inflamed, nothing very much was done to assist the English settlers, and

Parliament lost their alliance, for what it was worth.

On November 20, five days before the King arrived in London, the Grand Remonstrance was put to the vote. The political leaders expected a merely formal debate and a triumphant vindication of Parliamentary unity. Instead, a stormy discussion lasted from noon till midnight and the Remonstrance finally passed by a majority of eleven. It was then proposed to print it for distribution to the people, even before it was presented to the King. There were cries of protest from the large minority and a wild scene ensued. Swords were drawn, and but for the presence of mind of Hampden a free fight would have occurred. The House broke up at four in the morning without coming to a decision, but in that night the unity of the House of Commons was finally shattered and the Royalist party was born. Pym could imprison one of the protesting members and print the Remonstrance in spite of their opposition, but with only a small Parliamentary majority he could no longer honestly pretend that he represented the nation. He and his followers still did keep up that pretence, and perhaps they convinced themselves, but from that time they relied more and more on terrorism for enforcing the divine right of Parliament, which in these circumstances became an end in itself instead of a means for establishing good government.

The King was received in the streets of London with a strange outburst of popular acclamation, and he set himself to increase the support of the more conservative elements in the City and

Parliament. Pym had much ado to preserve the atmosphere of panic with rumours of plots and spates of petitions, against evil counsellors, Papists, and bishops. At last he hit on a scheme which drove the King from his strong defensive position and stung him into action. Charles heard that the Commons were going to impeach the Queen, whose intrigues to win the Papal support for her husband could easily be construed as high treason. Again, Charles's love for his wife proved a fatal handicap to his policy. He decided to strike first and sent his Attorney-General to the House of Lords with an accusation of treason against one of their number and five of the Commons (including Pym and Hampden). He demanded their arrest, but neither House seemed likely to obey him. This was on January 3, 1642, and the next day Charles – goaded by his wife, whose impatient temper was sharpened by the danger in which she lived – went with an armed escort to the Commons to effect the arrest. But the accused Members had already escaped, having been warned by traitors about the Court. One of these, Lady Carlisle, was supposed to be the Queen's dearest friend, and had been told in confidence of the intended manœuvre. Many years later Henrietta recalled how she had confessed to her husband her fatal indiscretion, and that he had never uttered a word of reproach. It was this quality of magnanimity, becoming more conspicuous as his fortunes darkened, that won him the devotion he had lacked in happier days.

It is doubtful, even if Charles had brought the leaders to trial, whether he would have been able



to secure their condemnation, as he was incapable of working up crowd emotion in his own favour. He could only state the issues as he saw them, not as they might appeal to the average man, which is the secret of successful propaganda. Pym, with his talk of "fears and prejudices," knew exactly what he was doing; and, on this occasion, the King's failure brought about a strong revival of Parliamentary popularity. The accused members were concealed in the City, and the feeling against the King was so strongly expressed in angry petitions and by threatening crowds that he decided to leave London and seek support elsewhere. But so long as his wife was in England his hands were tied, and it was arranged that she should go to Holland with her little daughter Mary, who had recently been married to the heir of the Prince of Orange. She would also take the Crown jewels in the hopes of bartering them for the supplies her husband would so sorely need in the coming struggle. For the inevitable civil war was now foreseen and feared by both parties. The political leaders had expected the King to yield them the control of the Militia, the last barrier between them and omnipotence, but, with the Queen gone and the Prince of Wales by his side, he at last felt free to defy them. At the beginning of March 1642 he started on his journey to the North, where, away from Parliamentary influence, he believed the bulk of the people would rally to his cause. His opponents thought so too and they sent deputations after him, beseeching him to return to his loving subjects at Westminster. One of their number who waited on him at Newmarket

asked if he would grant them the Militia "for a time." "By God!" exclaimed Charles; "not for an hour." At last he had come to the end of his concessions; from henceforth the revolutionaries must abandon all shadow of legality in their struggle for power and rely on the sword. They appointed new Lord Lieutenants for each county and gave them authority over the Militia. It only remained to be seen which Lord Lieutenants would be obeyed in the crisis.

Charles made his headquarters at York from March 19 till the middle of August. All that time an elaborate paper-war was conducted between him and the Houses of Parliament. Both sides were trying to convince their countrymen that justice, freedom, and safety were faced with bigotry, tyranny, and revolution. Charles had two clever men to help him with his manifestos, Lord Falkland and Edward Hyde, both Members of Parliament, both formerly distinguished among the reformers. They represented the large number of Englishmen who now saw in the new order something narrower, harsher, meaner than the old. Throughout the summer many of the Peers and some of the Commons made their way to York, while in the absence of moderate men the Houses became ever more despotic both in their attitude and their terms. The first act of war took place in April when Hotham, Governor of Hull, shut the gates of that town against the King and his followers. After this incident it was only the difficulty of raising men and money that prevented a Royalist army from taking the field. Though numbers might be equally divided, Parliament held the allegiance of the City of

London, where nearly all the wealth of the country was collected, of the principal seaports, and owing to the unexpected compliance of Northumberland, the Lord High Admiral, of the Navy as well. It was only through the munificence of one or two great landowners – notably Lord Worcester who, that summer, gave over £100,000 – and of the universities, that the King was able to answer the Parliamentary challenge. On August 9 the Commons, whose numbers had greatly dwindled in the last months, swore to live and die with the Earl of Essex, whom they had made their general. On the 18th they denounced as traitors all who gave assistance to the King, while declaring that the Houses of Parliament had taken up arms for “the safety of the King’s person” and for “the preservation of the true religion, laws, liberties, and peace of the kingdom.”

On August 22 the King’s standard was raised at Nottingham and a fortnight later he set out towards Shrewsbury to collect men for his march on London. By many of his friends he seemed to have embarked on a forlorn hope, but Charles was not despondent. Once he was convinced of the justice of his cause no vicissitudes could affect his steady courage. His religion, the monarchy, and its supporters had been challenged, and he was ready to die in their defence.

## CHAPTER VII

AUG. 1642 — MAY 1646

Edgehill — Newbury — Marston Moor — Cromwell — Lostwithiel —  
Naseby — King goes to the Scots.

WITH the outbreak of war, Englishmen found themselves obliged to take sides for King or Parliament. Most of them had never envisaged killing or being killed in defence of their political convictions. A large number of thoughtful gentlemen had great difficulty in deciding which cause to adopt, and consecutively tried both. On the one hand, the King was still sacred in their eyes, and rebellion a crime, akin to blasphemy and murder ; on the other, they felt a new loyalty to Parliament, the triumph of whose forces in the coming struggle would ensure the supremacy of their own class. At the beginning of the war the numbers on each side were fairly equally divided, but the material resources — money, ammunition, ships, ports — were mostly at the disposal of Parliament. The King's chief asset was moral — the national monarchy, familiar to all and a traditional cause for which to fight. Out of London, Parliament had no such popular significance, and it was not till Oliver Cromwell turned the name of God into a battle-cry that an enthusiasm was aroused greater than what was felt for the King. Till then the London trained bands, who proved the best soldiers in the rebel army, were largely inspired by local patriotism.

They were determined that their city should not be invaded, and they fought bravely and successfully in its defence.

Another advantage the Royalist army had, at first, over its opponents – the cavalry was commanded by a professional soldier, though a very young one, the King's nephew Rupert (son of the Princess Palatine). He was, unfortunately, as hot-tempered as he was valiant, and made no attempt to conceal the low opinion he formed of most of his colleagues, who in their turn were hostile to this foreigner of twenty-two put in authority over elderly Englishmen. However, both armies suffered from lack of unity amongst the commanders, from quarrels between the civilians and soldiers, from tepid supporters and religious differences. The King, in particular, was handicapped by the violent anti-Catholic feeling of his Protestant subjects. The Catholics had given him valuable help and he could not afford to alienate them, but his "Popish army" supplied good propaganda for the Parliamentary leaders, who did not fail to suggest that Charles himself was Popishly affected. His dealings in Ireland were still more unpopular, even with his own side, and none the less because they were dictated by common sense. The rebel party in Ireland had overrun the country, and Charles's deputy, the Marquess of Ormonde, could make little headway against them. A Protestant of Norman descent, he was not unsympathetic to the Catholics and devoted to the King's service. Charles ordered him to make peace with the Irish, granting certain religious and political concessions so that the English troops could be liberated for

England. These concessions were anathema to the Protestants both in England and Ireland, in whose eyes all Irish Catholics were outside the pale of humanity. To make even a truce with them was bad enough, but actually to seek their help against English Protestants, as Charles later in the war attempted, was to reverse the laws of nature. Perfectly aware of this sentiment, he tried to conduct his bargainings secretly, which unfortunately gave his promises a less convincing air to the Irish. Therefore, throughout the Civil War, the King received little help from Ireland, only still worse odium on its account. On the other hand, the Parliamentary cause was even more repugnant to the natives, with its plan of complete extirpation of their Faith and confiscation of their lands. Perhaps it may be said that, if Ireland had not existed, the course of the war would not have been very different; but that Charles's reputation has suffered unfairly from his unsuccessful dealings with the Irish leaders is likewise evident, and that fear of the consequences of these dealings inflamed English racial hatred to a degree which later expressed itself in the massacres of Drogheda and Wexford.

The parallel of Charles's recourse to Ireland was the House of Commons once again falling back on the Scotch Covenanters. Their deal was more successful than the King's, in spite of high pay demanded by their allies, which included the signature of every member of Parliament for the Solemn League and Covenant. This was in the autumn of 1643 when, the war appearing to go all in the King's favour, the cry for peace was raised threateningly, even in the City and at Westminster.

However, unlike Charles, the House of Commons could pay their allies, and the eventual Scotch descent into England helped to turn the war decisively in the rebels' favour.

From the beginning the chances of the monarchy emerging victorious from the struggle were slight, but the feebleness of the Parliamentary command and the half-heartedness of many of its soldiers gave the Royalists a temporary advantage in the west and north of England. Charles took an active part in the fighting, and it is pleasant to reflect, in face of the tragedy of his end, that he experienced some success and, probably, some happiness in his campaigns. In youth he had longed to be a soldier, and even now military life was more congenial to him than politics. The company of men of action always appealed to him, and his expert horsemanship and constant practice of arms enabled him to bear days of battle and long marches without fatigue. Only the quarrels of his friends were a perpetual trial, even to his disciplined patience, and he also suffered from their blackmailing demands for honours and offices in exchange for their support. Otherwise the battlefield, with all its dangers and hardships, was an agreeable alternative to some of the scenes at the Council of War.

The course of the campaigns and the King's part therein can be only briefly related here. After leaving Nottingham the royal forces marched into the West, collecting men and money, and then made towards London. The first encounter was the fierce but indecisive battle at Edgehill, near Banbury, on October 13, 1642, where both sides claimed the victory. Essex, who commanded

the rebels, fell back to London, and Charles advanced to Oxford, which remained his headquarters for the rest of the war. Thence he marched on London, reaching Brentford early in November, in hopes that the appearance of his army at their gates would induce the enemy to come to terms. But the civic patriotism of the Londoners was roused, and the terror of Prince Rupert's reputation inspired them to defend their capital rather than yield it to his mercies. The offer, at Turnham Green, of very tough opposition forced the invading army to retreat to Reading, and any chance of finishing the war with one rapid blow was over for the time.

Throughout 1643 the King still had a chance of victory. The longer the war continued the more unpopular the leaders at Westminster became. Their promises of liberty seemed a mockery when coupled with unprecedented taxation, and it was only by terrorism that Pym managed to keep the poorer citizens in control. Once in the old days, when reproached for his encouragements of mob-violence, he had exclaimed, "God forbid that I should prevent the people obtaining their just desires in such a way." Now his allies had turned on him, and women were shouting outside the Houses of Parliament, "Give us that dog Pym!" It needed a charge of soldiers to disperse them.

In the February of that year, Henrietta Maria landed in Yorkshire, bringing arms and ammunition to her husband. From the outbreak of war she had been very active in Holland, collecting supplies in exchange for the Crown jewels, and her health had suffered from anxieties and overwork. Away from Charles she became depressed and



irritable as her letters to him at this epoch plainly show, with their peevish criticisms of his plans, his friends, and even his character. But, once in action, her spirits rose and she met dangers and hardship with gaiety and courage. She escaped from a terrible storm in the North Sea and from the enemy fleet, which pursued her ship into Bridlington harbour and bombarded the house in which she had taken shelter. She and her ladies had to take cover in a ditch while shot fell around them. All this was stimulating to the Queen, and it was with a sense of exhilaration that the "she-generalissima," as she called herself, set out to join her husband that summer. Charles went to meet her on Edgehill field and brought her to Oxford, where her presence, however gratifying to him, was a focus for Court jealousies and intrigues.

Soon after her arrival (in August 1643) Charles rejoined his main army, which was besieging Gloucester. Rupert had recently captured Bristol, and Gloucester was now the only important town held for the Parliament in the West. The inhabitants defended it successfully till Essex and his London trained bands came to their relief, raising the siege. The royal army tried to cut off their opponents on their return to London, and a battle was fought at Newbury. Although neither side could claim a victory, the Royalist losses were so great that the rebels were able to proceed to London without further opposition, and Charles once more returned to Oxford.

It was at this juncture that the Scotch agreed to come to the assistance of Parliament and that the Covenant was established as the touchstone

of righteousness in England as well as Scotland. It was not by any means popular with many who signed it, as it entailed the abolition of the English Church and bringing Scottish domination into English affairs, but it was the spiritual price of much-needed help and served as a party shibboleth to mark down anyone who showed lingering signs of independence.

The Scotch alliance was the last blow struck by Pym for the cause in which he believed so passionately. He died in December 1643, and without his leadership the power of the House of Commons began insensibly to decline. He had raised that body to such heights that nobody realised how shaky were its foundations and what a short-lived support they might give. They were to sustain some shattering blows in the near future and it was not for many years that the Lower House entirely regained the moral and material supremacy it had enjoyed in the days of Pym.

At the beginning of 1644 the Scotch army crossed the Tweed, and by the summer the King's forces in the North, under the Marquess of Newcastle, were besieged in York by two rebel armies. Prince Rupert, hitherto invincible, fought his way from the South to their relief, and at his approach the Parliamentary general, Fairfax, retreated to Marston Moor, a few miles away. Newcastle was thus able to join Rupert outside the city. Their united forces numbered about 18,000 to the Parliament's 25,000, and Rupert, hoping to win the whole North for the King by a decisive victory, determined to risk a battle. In his pocket was a letter from his uncle, telling him that "if York be lost, I shall esteem my crown little less." On

the evening of July 2, 1644, the two armies faced each other, and Rupert, not contemplating an engagement that day, was sitting down to supper when suddenly the enemy charged. Caught unprepared, his famous cavalry broke and fled from the field. The leader of the opposing cavalry, Lieutenant-General Cromwell, kept his men well in hand and turned them against the flank of the hitherto victorious Royalist infantry, who were cut to pieces where they stood. It was a complete victory, and in this action the whole North was lost to Charles. Newcastle's army had ceased to exist, and Newcastle himself – a very grand gentleman, who had spent vast sums in the King's cause, risked his life, and seen most of his tenants killed – now retired to the Continent, unable to bear the shame of defeat.

The battle of Marston Moor saw the first great triumph of Oliver Cromwell's leadership. Though he was forty-three at the outbreak of war and had no previous military experience, he soon made his mark as a cavalry officer, while his gifts of organisation had kept the eastern counties continuously under Parliamentary control. Henceforth, his insight and skill led him quickly upwards to the supreme position among the enemies of the monarchy. Not that he was now, or ever, a theoretical Republican; indeed, it would be difficult to say what were his governing principles, except an intense conviction that he was an instrument in the hand of the Lord to execute vengeance on His enemies and to establish in England the rule of the Saints. This vague, if violent, design, when translated into practical politics, seemed to him compatible at different

times with monarchical, Parliamentary, and military government. At the beginning of the war he was a member of Parliament, chiefly noted for his passionate Calvinism and his cousinship to Hampden and others of the popular leaders. He was the son of a Huntingdon squire, the cadet of a very rich family which had acquired huge properties at the dissolution of the monasteries and had stood well in royal favour ever since. Oliver's uncle, the head of the family, having overspent himself, partly in lavish entertainment of King James, had to sell his large house near Huntingdon to one of the Montagus, when Oliver was a young man ; and these facts have a certain bearing on his character. His horror of Popery, which reached at times a hysterical mania, was natural in the descendant of a family whose wealth, position, and civilisation dated from the spoliation of the monasteries. To such a family the Reformation, sixty years before Oliver's birth, was indeed a change from darkness to light ; and the fear of material darkness again engulfing his little world must have been interwoven with his vision of the Popish menace.

That his uncle had wasted the estate in entertainment of royalty may have given a grudging turn to Cromwell's thoughts of the King, and that the estate had been sold to the Montagus certainly made him hostile to that family, one of whose members, the Earl of Manchester, was a general in the Parliamentary army. But, though Cromwell's animosities were clear enough, his aspirations were for the moment limited to perfecting the military arm with a view to a decisive defeat of the King in the field. The means of establishing

the Kingdom of God would doubtless be made clear to God's servant in due time.

Happily unaware of the formidable instrument now employed against him, Charles commanded an active and successful campaign between May and November 1644. In April he had to part once more from his wife, this time for ever. She was again pregnant and was anxious that the child should be born away from the scene of war – if need be in some port whence she could escape to France. She chose Exeter, and here on June 16 her ninth child, afterwards Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, was born. Recent events, as well as her own too great activities, had told on the Queen's health, and the birth of this child left her seriously ill. The Parliamentary army under Essex was approaching Exeter, and she had to appeal to him to give her a safe-conduct to Bath, where she might hope to recover her health. Essex refused, offering instead to conduct her to London, where, she knew, impeachment and probably death awaited her. She preferred to risk the perils of a journey in disguise to Falmouth, whence she took ship for France, four weeks after the baby's birth. For some months she remained in seclusion, shattered in mind and body, and then resumed her task of working in her husband's cause.

In the meanwhile, Charles had been very active. Besieged in Oxford, he had escaped with his army, had marched into Worcestershire followed by the rebels, had returned, and fought a battle at Cropredy, near Banbury, in which he had gained the advantage, and had from thence pursued Essex's army westwards. He reached Exeter shortly after his wife had left it, saw his youngest

daughter for the first time and last time, and then marched after Essex into Cornwall. Here that indifferent general had allowed his army to be cut off at Lostwithiel. He himself escaped by sea, but his troops were forced to surrender to the King, to whom their arms and ammunition were more valuable than their persons. This triumph, for the moment, obliterated all thoughts of the disaster at Marston Moor only two months earlier. From Cornwall the King set out to fight his way back to Oxford. He was confronted at Newbury by the main rebel army under Cromwell and Manchester. Owing to the timid generalship of Manchester, the Royalists were able to hold their own all day against twice their numbers, and at night, escaping the enemy's outposts, they returned to Oxford. Here Charles settled for the winter, with his hopes of ultimate victory unduly raised by recent successes. Actually his chances, which had so largely depended on the disputes and incompetence of the enemy generals, were now almost gone. Cromwell had taken the situation in hand and was creating a professional and efficient army, independent of Parliament. After the battle of Newbury he openly denounced Manchester, exposing his half-heartedness. Now he promoted a measure called the Self-denying Ordinance which forbade any member of either House of Parliament to hold a commission in the Army. Thus he relieved Essex and Manchester of their commands (though he kept his own), and thus he dealt his first blow at the unqualified supremacy of Parliament. Hitherto the war had been fought for that supremacy, and Presbyterianism had been insisted on rather as a tribute to the

Houses' authority than as a perfect religious system. Under Cromwell the Army became as formidable a rival to Parliament as to the King. The soldiers recognised no superiors save God and their regimental officers, and with this double inspiration won many victories and committed many acts of savagery. Cromwell, himself, had said that "men of religion" were needed to fight against "these gentlemen of honour." And to men of that Calvinist religion the enemy were malignants and idolaters and Charles (remarkable for his clemency) the Man of Blood.

But religious inspiration did not blind Cromwell to the advantages of material efficiency, and his troops were always well trained and paid. His side still had the great financial resources of London to draw on, while the Royalist army was all the time dwindling for lack of money and munitions. In the spring of 1645 the only hopeful prospect seemed to be in Scotland, where Montrose and his following of Highlanders inflicted a series of crushing defeats upon the Covenanters. Charles decided to march northwards and try to join his Scotch allies. At the beginning of May he and Rupert left Oxford, and after capturing Leicester remained a few days in the neighbourhood collecting supplies. Here Fairfax, the new commander-in-chief, and Cromwell, the true leader of the Army, pursued them, opposing 18,000 men to Charles's 7,500. The armies met near Naseby village on June 14, and Rupert for the last time led a charge against the rebels. He drove the enemy off the field, but, at the other end of the line, Cromwell had again used with success the tactics of Marston Moor.

He defeated the cavalry opposite him and then, turning round, attacked the infantry on the flank. By the time Rupert returned from his charge the battle was lost for the King, and the kingdom as well ; for, of his 7,500 soldiers, 1,000 had been killed and 4,000 taken prisoner. (A hundred Irishwomen, camp-followers, were murdered after the battle as a protest against Papistry and vice.) Charles, in an attempt to lead his reserve cavalry into action to retrieve the day, had been swept along in the general flight, leaving all his secret papers on the field.

Cromwell, in spite of his vastly superior numbers, looked on the battle as a triumph for God's chosen few against the hosts of Baal.

Another point of view was expressed in a letter to Rupert written two months later when Charles was trying to raise fresh forces in Wales, and his nephew, a practical soldier, was advising him to come to terms with the enemy. "If I had any other quarrel but the defence of my religion, crown, and friends, you had full reason for your advice ; for I confess that speaking either as a mere soldier or statesman, I must say there is no probability but of my ruin ; yet, as a Christian, I must tell you that God will not suffer rebels and traitors to prosper nor this cause to be overthrown. And whatsoever personal punishment it shall please Him to inflict upon me, must not make me repine, much less give over this quarrel . . . though I must aver to all my friends that he that will stay with me at this time, must expect to resolve either to die for a good cause, or (which is worse) to live as miserable in maintaining it as the violence of insulting rebels can make him."



With this conviction, Charles continued the hopeless struggle in the West, encouraged by a devoted and irresponsible young man, Lord Digby, whose optimism no disasters could quench. And it was needed, for soon came a fresh blow. The admired and trusted Rupert, acting reasonably enough as a "mere soldier," had surrendered Bristol on September 11 without resistance. "You assured me that (if no mutiny happened) you would keep Bristol for four months," wrote his uncle. "Did you keep it for four days?" With the bitter suspicion of a general desertion among his followers and with Digby talking of treachery, Charles was persuaded to deprive Rupert of his command. A few days later, Montrose's series of victories came to an end with the defeat of Philiphaugh. Charles, who had again set out to join him, returned to Oxford on November 5 without a further chance in the field. The Prince of Wales was still at the head of a nominal army in Cornwall, but it was a beaten, dissolute array, and by the middle of March 1646 it had surrendered to Fairfax. The Prince with his council escaped to Jersey. On March 21 the last Royalist force was defeated at Stow-on-the-Wold. The victors found their enemy general, the veteran Astley, placidly seated on a drum. "You have now done your work," he said, "and may go play, unless you will fall out among yourselves."

He had touched on the one hope left for the King. Already there were signs of ill-feeling between the Scotch, the Army and the Parliament. Each of these bodies was in terror of exclusion from a treaty that Charles might make with one

or both of the others. This, in fact, Charles also hoped to accomplish, but found all parties very unaccommodating. The Scotch were prepared to support his regal power if he would sign the Covenant ; the Parliament wished him to sign the Covenant in order to destroy his regal power ; the Army, or Independents, were opposed to the Covenant, but also to Episcopacy. The Queen urged her husband to give up the Church for the sake of peace, but on this point Charles was determined not to yield, and wrote to her sadly, pointing out the disastrous results of his concession in Strafford's case, " Yet, I believe, if thy personal safety had not been at stake I might have hazarded the rest," and begging her to believe " that no slight cause can make me deny to do what thou desirest, who am eternally thine."

Henrietta Maria, since finding herself again established in her native land, was fast becoming spiritually estranged from her husband, and in her eyes his obstinate defence of a heretical Church seemed merely fantastic. She never ceased in her efforts to help him, but she was out of touch with English affairs and easily duped by the French chief Minister, Mazarin, who continued Richelieu's policy of fomenting English civil strife in the interests of French imperialism.

• The loss of his adored wife's sympathy with his point of view was to be one of Charles's principal griefs throughout his coming troubles.

By the beginning of April 1646 it was clear he must come to terms with one body of his opponents. He had confided to the faithful Ormonde (still struggling to create a united Royalist party in Ireland) that he hoped to go to London if

“ the conditions may be such as a gentleman may own and that the rebels may acknowledge me as King ; being not without hope that I shall be able so to draw either the Presbyterians or Independents to side with me for extirpating the one or the other that I shall be really King again.” This hope was, for the moment, unfulfilled, and he turned in despair to the Scottish leaders, who had made some vague unwritten promises of support. Charles was in no condition to be particular about details, as the rebel army was approaching Oxford. On April 27 he set out in disguise, with only two attendants, in the direction of London, but at Slough he turned northwards, and on May 6 he reached Southwell, near which town the Scottish army was encamped. Their promised aid for the King vanished on closer acquaintance. It became clear that unless he signed the Covenant and gave his consent to the establishment of Presbyterianism in England and Scotland he would be kept a prisoner indefinitely. The day after his arrival their army marched off to Newcastle, taking their valuable hostage with them. The fatal round had begun between the different forces struggling for power in the England of 1646.

## CHAPTER VIII

MAY 1646 — DEC. 1648

King at Holmby — Cornet Joyce — Hampton Court — the Isle of Wight.

OF the four parties who confronted each other in May 1646, all except the Scotch claimed to represent the people of England and tried to convert the vast mass of peaceful Englishmen to their beliefs. The Scotch were only valuable as possible allies for any of the other three, Royalists, Parliament, or Army.

The Royalists could point out that a free election would result in an overwhelming majority in favour of the King's restoration. Both the Parliamentary and Army leaders were aware of this potential majority and determined to prevent an election till they could come to terms with the King and put his name at the top of their respective programmes. The politicians, having enjoyed uninterrupted power for more than five years, saw no reason why they should not enjoy it indefinitely. They had long ago expelled all antagonists from their House and worked very comfortably with the few Peers who still continued to sit in the House of Lords. It seemed to them merely a matter of time till the King would consent to the permanent establishment of Presbyterianism and the political supremacy of the more enterprising representatives of the upper and middle classes.

In January 1647 they secured his person and

conducted him to Holmby House in Northamptonshire. The Scotch had willingly abandoned him to the Parliamentary Commissioners in exchange for their arrears of pay, as during nine months' captivity at Newcastle he had consistently refused to take the Covenant.<sup>1</sup> It would have been impossible at that time for the Scotch leaders, without undermining their dominating position in English affairs, to support a King who rejected their religious system. But in this refusal Charles was firm to the end.

For several months after his arrival at Holmby he was completely isolated from the outer world, and his overtures to Parliament met with no response. After a while, rumours reached him of trouble between the politicians and the Army. Nominally the soldiers were in the employ of Parliament and had no reason to exist after the war was over or to take any part in politics. Actually they were a highly organised, opinionated body of men who considered that they alone had won the war, and for purposes very different from those prescribed by the House of Commons. If one leaves out the godliness and other indefinable moralities, their programme differs from the Parliamentary one mainly in substituting licensed Nonconformity for Presbyterianism, and a more democratic government for the oligarchy which at the moment ruled at Westminster. In other words, they wanted a régime in which the type of men who predominated in the Army would have a leading part and enjoy the fruits of victory.

<sup>1</sup> It should be emphasised that the Covenanters were proposing, not only to establish the Presbyterian Church throughout the United Kingdom, but to deny any toleration to Anglicans, whose Faith was to be extirpated.

Most of these had been artisans or small tradesmen, and based their conduct on their own inspired interpretation of the Bible. They showed an alarming lack of respect for the rights of property, for traditional authority or anybody but their own officers. The Houses of Parliament, faced with this threat to their power, determined to disband the Army or send it to Ireland as quickly as possible. Unfortunately they had not paid any wages for months, and the soldiers were demanding their arrears before they went home. The Houses, not understanding how little real power they had if once an armed force chose to challenge it, adopted a high-and-mighty attitude to the petitioners. Whereupon the whole Army united against the politicians and a mutiny broke out. The latter in alarm promised to pay some of the arrears at once, while beseeching the principal officers to disband the regiments. The general, Sir Thomas Fairfax, was a respectable, weak man, but the real leaders were Lieutenant-General Cromwell and his son-in-law Ireton. At first these two appeared in favour of maintaining the authority of Parliament, but they soon saw it would be impossible to serve both Parliament and Army. Cromwell, though a member of Parliament, decided at once in which direction his duty lay. In all moments of crisis the voice of the Army was as the voice of God to him. The price of the soldiers' obedience to him in the day of battle was his obedience to their demands for political influence. Besides, he was too much in sympathy with them to wish to see a peace made, between King, Parliament and Scots, in which the Army, and incidentally himself and most of his relations,

would have no share. In the May of 1647 it seemed as if the House of Commons, anxious to forestall an Army plot to seize the King, had decided to treat with him on more reasonable conditions than hitherto. Charles had suggested that Presbyterianism should be established for three years and the old Militia kept under Parliamentary control for ten, by which time he hoped the Royalist reaction would be strong enough throughout the country to restore the monarchy and Episcopacy. He asked permission to come to London to discuss these terms. This request was secretly granted by the House of Lords and some of the Commons, who at the same time were angling for Scotch support against the Army.

When this news was betrayed by the Vanes to Cromwell he decided to seize the trump card for himself before his opponents could play it. On May 31 a meeting was held in his house, and there, unknown to Fairfax, the officers agreed to send a body of men, under a certain Cornet Joyce, to seize the King at Holmby and bring him to the Army. Joyce immediately set out with five hundred horse and, on the morning of June 3, reached Holmby. Here the soldiers who were guarding the King went over to the new arrivals, but the principal officer, whose arrest was also intended, had already fled. Nevertheless, Joyce, not feeling safe from a counter-attack, that night informed Charles that he must start out with the Army for a new destination. The King was in no condition to refuse, and, besides, any change might be for the better. Early next morning he came out on to the lawn, where he found Joyce with his five hundred troopers drawn up behind

him. Charles knew he was in this man's power, but it amused him to embarrass his captor with a few searching questions. "What commission have you to secure my person? Have you nothing in writing from Sir Thomas Fairfax?" Joyce had no desire to betray Cromwell's complicity in the plot nor the latter's neglect of his commander-in-chief's authority, and tried to evade the King's curiosity, but was held to the point. At last Joyce, in desperation pointing to the formidable bodyguard, said, "There is my commission." Charles smiled pleasantly. He had discovered that there was a power in the Army other than its nominal general. "It is as fair a commission and as well written as I have seen in my life," he remarked, and shortly after set out with his guard to Newmarket.

Here he was near the Army headquarters and here the principal officers came to pay their respects. All, including Cromwell, swore that Joyce had carried off the King without their knowledge or approval. "I will not believe you unless you hang Joyce," replied Charles, and, though still hoping to come to terms with Cromwell, thereafter viewed him with the deepest distrust. The Army officers no less wished to stand well with the King for the time. They knew Parliament was trying to disband the soldiers and arrest their leaders, while in the ranks a republican, communistic spirit was threatening to dissolve the regiments in anarchy. Cromwell and Ireton did everything in their power to secure the support of the King for their party against the various forces menacing it. They allowed him the ministrations of his chaplains and the pleasure



of seeing his younger children ; and in general gave him an amount of respectful attention very welcome after the insolence and neglect he had suffered from Parliament and the Scotch. Nevertheless, he had no intention of being restored as a mere puppet of the Army leaders, which as the summer progressed was clearly becoming the object of Cromwell and Ireton. In August the struggle between Parliament and Army ended with the triumphal entry of the Army into London and the temporary submission of the Parliamentary majority to the power of the sword. In the same month the King was brought to Hampton Court and the negotiations with him came to a crisis. Ireton had drawn up "Heads of the Proposals of the Army" and promised that if the King would agree to these the soldiers would "purge and purge" the Commons till they passed them. These proposals were less unfavourable to the monarchy than the Parliamentary terms, but if Charles had accepted them he would have been forced to give himself up body and soul to the Army for the rest of his reign. His friends were to be disabled from taking part in political life, there was to be no established Church and the chief power was to reside in a Council of State in which Cromwell, Ireton, and like men would certainly have the principal offices. Charles has been blamed by most modern historians for not relying wholeheartedly on the sincerity and devotion of Cromwell but, instead, bargaining with him, Parliament, and the Scotch all at once. It is true that Cromwell was anxious to restore the King in the summer of 1647 as he was statesman enough to appreciate that the majority of the

people of England longed for the monarchy to be re-established, and that the egalitarian spirit in the Army had little root elsewhere. Nevertheless, it was with these men, "the Saints," as they called themselves, who attributed every impulse (even of obvious self-interest) to the inspiration of God, that Cromwell felt most in sympathy, whose religious beliefs he shared, and whose fortunes were bound up with his own. Therefore, if Charles had really put the monarchy into their hands, the whole colour of English civilisation would have been changed ; another Reformation would have taken place. What the result would have been may perhaps be guessed from the parallel character of England in the early Victorian age, for not till then did men of a similar type to these take command of the nation's destiny and thought.

By October Cromwell had come to the conclusion that the King was trying to use the Army instead of allowing the Army to use him ; he was, moreover, by now treating with the Scotch and could not be counted on. At the same time the situation was complicated by the republican zeal of the more fanatical officers, who looked upon Cromwell as a backslider, betraying the Good Cause for royal favours. It became clear, then, that unless he made a complete change of front he would lose all. Consequently, resolved on a reconciliation with the Army, he attended a meeting in November at which the officers were relating the answers they had received to their prayers for guidance a few days earlier. The Word of the Lord had shown the dependable quality of a penny-in-the-slot machine. One

supplicant had been told that "the work before them was to take away the negative voice of the King and Lords"; another that "their liberties could only be recovered with the sword"; while a third found "he could no longer pray for the King, that God would make him yet a blessing to the kingdom." Cromwell did his best to gain time, while defending himself from the accusation of having tried to "set up" the King and the House of Lords, whom he even agreed that it was probable, though not certain, that "God intended to destroy." In other words, he was prepared once more to lead the Army in the way it wanted to go, but he was also anxious to avoid any rash action likely to result in a fresh quarrel with the House of Commons. Unlike most of his military subordinates, Cromwell realised that the Army leaders must ally themselves with one of the other parties if they were permanently to establish their policy in England. In fact, all the rest of his life was spent in seeking a broader basis for his rule than fifty thousand soldiers, but his actions irrevocably alienated him from his countrymen, and in the end he always had to rely upon the sword :

*The same arts that did gain  
A power must it maintain.*

Thus, in 1647, he had tried to incorporate the King into his military nucleus, and when he found this impossible he turned to the Houses of Parliament. Here for a time he met with better success. Unfortunately, owing to expulsion and desertion, the Lords now numbered only about one-fifth of their full number and the Commons one-half, of

which many rarely attended. The sitting Members, who had been elected seven years earlier, no longer represented a large party of their countrymen as they had done in 1640, nor, in fact, anyone but themselves. Nearly all had found their jobs profitable and had no intention of submitting to an election, and, though at different times they had been bullied by the Scotch and the Army, they still retained some of the prestige that their former position had created. They were now readier to come to terms with the Army leaders as the King was known to be treating with the Scotch, while the dangerous growth of Royalist feeling throughout the country, imperilling both Army and Parliament, was inevitably bringing about their coalition.

At this juncture, Cromwell's reconciliation with the republican officers came to the King's ears, doubtless through the Scotch Commissioners; also the sinister news that the more extreme elements were demanding his blood. He decided to escape from Hampton Court and told Major Whalley, who guarded him, that he wished to withdraw his parole. Now this Whalley was Cromwell's cousin, and it is pretty certain that he informed Cromwell of the King's fears and consequent determination to escape. Cromwell must have seen in this possibility a wonderful solution for his own troubles. He thoroughly disliked Charles, whose reasoned principles were utterly repellent to his own inspired opportunism, and who in leading him on a wild-goose chase had nearly ruined his relations with his fellow soldiers. Also he knew that a Royalist rising might take place at any moment, and as long as

the prisoner remained so near London he could easily be rescued and set at the head of his loyal forces. If only he could be persuaded to escape to some remote spot and there fall into the hands of a staunch Army man who would keep him safe indefinitely ! Such a place was the Isle of Wight, whose new Governor, Robert Hammond, was Cromwell's cousin by marriage and for whom he had the tenderest feelings.

Most of Cromwell's contemporaries attributed to him a decisive rôle in the following events, which still retain an element of mystery. It is known that he wrote a letter to Whalley on November 11, warning him that the King's life was in danger, and Whalley showed it to Charles, who the evening before had received another letter, anonymous, and likewise containing alarming accounts of republican plots against him. This letter was also thought by some to have been concocted by Cromwell. The King had been planning his escape for the past week and these repeated threats of assassination made him decide to leave that very night. He had confided his intentions to three Royalist officers, Legge, Berkeley, and Ashburnham, who had been allowed to attend him at Hampton Court. Of these, Ashburnham was chiefly responsible for organising the enterprise. It is to be noted that though the guards had been doubled from the time the King had withdrawn his parole, yet there was no sentry at the door through which he escaped and he had no difficulty either in crossing the river or riding off with his companions. They rode all night and the next day reached Southampton Water. Here the King proposed to stay

at Titchfield House (inhabited by the Royalist Lady Southampton) while Berkeley and Ashburnham were to go to the Isle of Wight to sound Robert Hammond. It appears that Ashburnham had suggested the Island as a refuge for the King and Hammond as a trustworthy host. There was no very good reason for thinking so, unless Whalley and Cromwell had insinuated as much to Ashburnham, who they knew was devoted to his master, but easily influenced and rash. Anyway, Ashburnham and Berkeley crossed to the Island, found Hammond, and threw themselves on his loyalty. Hammond, though horrified at the sudden responsibility, thought it best to return with them to the King. When Ashburnham arrived at Titchfield and told Charles that Hammond was below, Charles exclaimed, "Oh ! Jack, thou hast undone me." Whereupon Ashburnham gallantly offered to kill Hammond. This Charles forbade, and, seeing now no other course, decided to return to the Island with his new captor. Perhaps Hammond would treat him as guest rather than prisoner ; and another escape might be possible later. First he expected to sign a definite treaty with the Scotch Commissioners, who were now the representatives of the Royalist-Presbyterians. (These, combined with the old Royalists, were numerically more powerful than any other party.)

A fortnight after his arrival, still not suspecting the violent designs of the Army leaders, he sent Berkeley to the mainland with a letter to Fairfax asking for his continued support. He had some reason to trust the officers' goodwill as they had just suppressed a mutiny of the Republicans (or

Levellers) at a rendezvous of not less than a third of the Army. On that occasion Cromwell had behaved with conspicuous courage, riding up to the mutineers with his sword drawn and compelling them to throw away the manifestos they had defiantly stuck in their hats.

Therefore it was a shock to Berkeley, coming to the Army headquarters at Windsor, to find himself treated with the greatest coldness by Fairfax and his officers. After a short interview he was forced to retire to his lodgings without achieving anything. In the middle of the night he had an interview with one officer, whose name he does not reveal, but with whom he had been intimate at Hampton Court. This man declared that Cromwell, Ireton, and "all of us" were the "archest villains in the world"; that they had decided to destroy the King and all his posterity, and that, to achieve this, eight hundred soldiers were about to go into the Island to fetch him to trial; and that his only chance was immediate escape. When Berkeley asked the reason for this abrupt change of design in Cromwell and Ireton, he was told that the Levelling party, though temporarily quelled, was too strong for them, and they had decided to throw in their lot with the extremists. Moreover, the officer continued, Cromwell had lately made an edifying confession to his friends that the glories of the world had dazzled his eyes, but in future, proposing to humble himself, he desired the prayers of his brother Saints for guidance. In the utmost alarm, Berkeley, on his return to the Isle of Wight, begged the King to make his escape, Hammond having not yet decided to treat him simply as a

prisoner. However, Charles determined to wait till he could come to terms with the Scotch Commissioners, which he finally accomplished on December 26, when both parties signed a nominally secret treaty known as the Engagement. By this agreement the Scotch promised to bring an army into England to restore Charles to his throne ; in return he was to establish Presbyterianism for three years with toleration for those who did not wish to take the Covenant. The ultimate settlement of the Church was to result from a free discussion between divines and laymen, in which the King was to play a prominent part and which would probably end in the re-establishment of the Episcopalian Church. The control of the Militia was once more to be vested in the Crown, all armies were to be disbanded, the present Parliament dissolved and a free Parliament elected, and an Act of Oblivion passed for past offences.

These terms were as favourable as Charles could hope for, and he had no hesitation in signing them in preference to an ultimatum presented by Parliament at the same time. Unfortunately, the Scottish nation was by no means united in support of a treaty made in its name. The signatories had been three Peers, and they did not represent the Kirk, whose leaders looked with horror on the measure of religious toleration allowed in the terms. Moreover, Argyll, their lay representative, who enjoyed a dictatorship in Scotland as long as the Royalist party was suppressed, did everything in his power to stir up opposition to the Engagement, so that when a Scotch army finally invaded England it was four



months too late and weakened by internecine strife.

As soon as Charles had signed the Engagement (December 26, 1647), rejecting the Parliamentary terms, he attempted to escape, but by this time Hammond had decided to do his duty by Parliament and Army and from that day kept the King a close prisoner in Carisbrooke Castle. He was encouraged by a visit from Cromwell and letters from him to "dear Robin," in which he was bidden to go on in the strength of the Lord. On January 3, 1648, Cromwell announced to him with pious emotion that the House of Commons had decided to make no more addresses to the King, and that anyone who applied to him without leave of both Houses would be guilty of high treason. He concluded with the reflection that "some of us think the King well with you and that it concerns us to keep the Island in great security because of the French, etc." Again, on April 6, Cromwell was able to send him the good news that his salary had been raised from £10 to £20 a week, that £500 a year was to be settled on him and his heirs, and a present of £1,000 sent at once.<sup>1</sup> Cromwell was less pleased to inform him of a well-planned but abortive attempt to escape on the King's part, only the narrowness of the prison window having prevented him.

It was true that, ever since Parliament and Army had united to keep him at best a prisoner for the rest of his life, Charles had been seeking safety in flight. All this time he was longing to put himself at the head of the Scotch army which

<sup>1</sup> All these sums are equivalent to five times as much nowadays, so Hammond's loyalty to the Army must have been as shaky as it was vital.

would shortly set out to restore him, but in spite of the plotting of his friends and the conversion of some of his keepers he was unsuccessful. There was always one traitor among his confidants and sooner or later Hammond was warned of his prisoner's intentions. On one occasion, in May 1648, a sentry who had been bribed by the King to let him pass repented at the last moment and confessed his crime to Hammond. The latter came into the King's bedroom an hour before the attempt was due and looked curiously at the window-bar, which had been eaten away at the base with nitric acid to facilitate its removal. "How now, Hammond," said the King, "what would you have?" "I have come to take leave of Your Majesty, for I hear you are going away." The King laughed and, with a triumph of self-control, said nothing further, but it is not surprising that his relations with the Governor henceforth became strained, nor that his natural melancholy increased. For many months, he later told a friend, the best company he had was a "little, old, crumpling man that made the fires." There was, however, one devoted woman plotter whose energy and care deserved a better success and who seems to have roused in the lonely King a temporary flame of gallantry. This was a Mrs. Whorwood, daughter of a former Court official, "a tall, well-fashioned gentlewoman," with red hair, thirty-seven years old, who had acted as secret agent for the Royalists since the beginning of the war and who by her courage and efficiency won general admiration from her party. She had provided a ship for the King's abortive attempt at flight in May, and in July she came to

the Isle of Wight and began on fresh schemes in collusion with the master of the Grammar School at Newport. To "sweet Jane Whorwood" the King wrote all his hopes and fears, interspersed with amorous expressions, intended probably "twixt jest and earnest," like his promised embraces. Gratitude, loneliness, the danger of death, and the unlikelihood of his ever seeing his wife again would all tend to attract him to this remarkable woman, though none of his companions seem to have suspected an illicit romance. A Royalist letter merely mentions that in 1647 she had obtained from the King a post for her lover, Sir Nicholas Bendish, as Ambassador to Constantinople. She was evidently a woman who could keep several irons in the fire.

It may be wondered why the Army leaders, having united in November 1647 in a determination to destroy the King, should allow him to remain for a year in the Isle of Wight, a centre for plots and a constant menace to their security. The best answer is given by Cromwell at a meeting with his more impatient followers in January 1648. There he confessed that he was convinced of the desirability of a Republic, but not of its immediate feasibility. He knew that the country was seething with discontent, civil war might soon break out again, and a Scottish army was preparing to invade England. Ever since the King had been imprisoned in the Isle of Wight he had become the centre of popular sympathy and, on March 27, his accession day, more bonfires were lighted in London than at any time since his return to Spain. Cromwell bent all his energies to keeping his followers united in preparation for the

impending crisis. They must crush the Royalists before they could deal with the King.

On May 1 the officers were at a three days' prayer-meeting when news was brought that the whole of South Wales was in revolt. Cromwell decided to set out at once with eight thousand men to relieve the Parliamentary forces, but first he joined in a unanimous resolution, "if ever the Lord brought us back again in peace, to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to an account for all the blood he had shed and mischief he had done to his utmost against the Lord's cause and people in these poor nations."

During the next three months the Lord's cause was in considerable danger. On May 21, Kent and Surrey rose for the King, and, on May 27, eight ships revolted from the Parliament and invited the Prince of Wales to take command. All might have gone well for the Royalists if the Scotch, torn by political differences, had not delayed their invasion till July. By that time the Welsh insurrection had been quelled and Cromwell was able to march northward to meet them. In the meanwhile the southern revolt had been reduced by Fairfax to the siege of Colchester, which held out from June 14 till August 27, though on August 17 the Royalist hopes were finally shattered by Cromwell's defeat of the Scotch army and the capture of its leader, the Duke of Hamilton. Shortly after, the ships under the Prince of Wales were driven by a storm from the mouth of the Thames and had to retire to Holland to refit. The Army was at last completely master of England.

Apart from Cromwell's military genius, the

Royalist defeat was largely due to the refusal of the City to declare for the King. Though the merchants and Presbyterian members of Parliament dreaded the power of the Army, they had all along been dreading still more Charles's triumphant restoration. Now that his last chance seemed gone, their fear of the Army returned, and once again they tried to strike a bargain with him. Accordingly, on September 18 (when Cromwell was away in Scotland arranging an alliance with Argyll), fifteen commissioners arrived in the Isle of Wight, but unfortunately for both parties they insisted on a complete surrender from the prisoner. Charles, still cherishing hopes of escape, tried to spin out discussions, but though he made great concessions the Houses were unsatisfied, and on November 27 the time allowed for the treaty expired without an agreement. A few days earlier the faithful Mrs. Whorwood had come hurriedly from London with news that the Council of Officers had unanimously resolved to bring the King to trial. But flight was no longer possible and the prisoner was by now resigned to his fate. "My Lords," he said to the commissioners from the Upper House on November 25, "you are come to take your leave of me and I believe we shall scarce see each other again. . . . You cannot but know that in my fall and ruin you may see your own, and that also near to you. I am fully informed of the whole carriage of the plot against me and mine, and nothing so much affects me as the sense and feeling I have of the sufferings of my subjects and the miseries that hang over my three kingdoms, drawn upon them by those who (upon pretences of good)

violently pursue their own interests and ends."

On November 27 an officer arrived in the Island with an order for Hammond to return to the mainland and report at headquarters. Hammond was still felt by the revolutionaries to be the weak link in their chain. For the last ten days, Ireton and Cromwell had been urging him by letters that the duty he thought he owed to Parliament might be merely a carnal imagination, while his duty to the Army was as his duty to God. Shortly after leaving the Island he was arrested. On the 29th two new officers arrived at Newport (where the King had been living in lodgings since the beginning of the treaty) with reinforcements of soldiers. The next night, Charles's friends begged him to take the last chance of flight. It was dark and stormy ; a friendly officer had told him the password and had prepared horses and a boat for him if once he managed to pass the guards. The King refused. He had given his parole, he said, and would not break it. In vain his friends argued that his word had been given to the Parliament, not to the Army. He still refused to stir, saying that the attempt would probably fail and only exasperate the Army. At that moment the thought of being once again caught while trying to escape was more distasteful to him than to wait passively on his fate. The next morning, December 1, the soldiers took him from the Island to Hurst Castle, a gloomy fortress on the Solent, where he remained till the 19th, when he was removed to Windsor.

These events, as Ireton and his friends would have expressed it, were very refreshing to the bowels of the Saints.

## CHAPTER IX

DEC. 1, 1648 — JAN. 30, 1649

Pride's Purge — the King's trial — execution.

WHEN Charles was taken to Hurst Castle, the Council of Officers still had to decide how to proceed in the business of killing him. The only logical way would have been by trial and condemnation at a court martial consisting of "Saints." The Army could not pretend to represent the majority of the English people, and indeed prided itself on representing the godly people only. Doubtless the simpler characters in the council would have preferred the logical way, but Ireton and Cromwell were aware of the difficulties in such a course. Even if the King were killed and his children disinherited, the problem of government would not be solved. There must be some kind of Parliament in a Republic, and Cromwell with his love of compromise (or having it both ways) longed that the present House of Commons should give a constitutional colour to the revolutionary actions of the Army by supporting it at this crisis. But the Republican party in the House did not number more than a quarter of its members. Obviously, the only way of making the minority felt was by expelling the majority.

On December 2 the Army (still under the nominal command of Fairfax) marched into London from Windsor and made its headquarters

at Whitehall. On the same day the House of Commons had been discussing the King's last offered concessions before he had been seized in the Isle of Wight. On the 5th a majority voted that the treaty with him should be continued. The next morning, before Parliament met, a body of soldiers, commanded by Colonel Pride, marched to the House and, as the members began to arrive, turned back all those who had voted in favour of coming to terms with the King. As a result, one hundred and forty-three were expelled and many more subsequently stayed away, either to mark their disapproval or through fear of the Army. About sixty members, all revolutionaries, remained of a body which had once numbered five hundred.

This little band shortly afterwards issued a manifesto, declaring "that the Commons of England in Parliament assembled, being chosen by and representing the people, have the supreme power in this nation."

"Pride's Purge" had taken place without the knowledge of Fairfax. Cromwell wished to appear equally ignorant of the matter. He had been in Yorkshire for the last few weeks besieging a belated Royalist garrison, and he took care not to arrive in London till the evening of the 6th. Nevertheless, he must have been in communication with Ireton, who would not have ventured to act without his approval. But ever since Cromwell had decided that Charles was to be put to death he had shrunk from the burden of responsibility, though not from the deed. At any rate that responsibility he was going to share with as many of his countrymen as he could muster. As the



moment for decision approached, there was a panic-stricken flight of all but the most blood-thirsty or single-minded idealists from the task of sitting in judgment on their King. Even many theoretical republicans turned away from what seemed to them a murderous farce, more dangerous to their liberties than Charles in all his power could be. On January 6 the Ordinance for the King's trial only passed the purged House of Commons by twenty-six votes to twenty, and, of the hundred and thirty-five commissioners nominated to try him, not more than seventy-one ever dared to sit.

Charles knew the strength of national feeling in his favour, but he also knew that there was no adequate organisation to resist the Army and its leaders. He pinned his hopes, therefore, to Cromwell's long-sighted judgments. That commander of genius must surely see that the King's death would plunge England in anarchy. The Prince of Wales was safe in Holland and would claim the throne, civil war and probably Continental wars would follow, and nothing but military force could make the people submit to the rule of the regicides. Charles did not consider that Cromwell might prefer to risk future dangers rather than present ruin. There was no room in England for both the divinely inspired general and the divinely appointed monarchy. Yet Cromwell's conscience was not quite easy. "If any man whatsoever," he said in the House of Commons on New Year's Day, 1649, "hath carried on the design of deposing the King and disinheriting his posterity" – the euphemism may be noted – "he should be the greatest traitor and

rebel in the world ; but, since the Providence of God hath cast this upon us, I cannot but submit to Providence."

In contrast to his judges, Charles enjoyed peace and freedom of mind during the last few weeks of his life. Once there was no longer any chance of escape nor any terms to be considered, nor the conflicting duties of concession and resistance, he could face death with resignation. He would be a martyr for the English Church and monarchy, in which he believed his countrymen's welfare and liberties were bound up. On December 21 he had been brought to Windsor. In spite of a strong guard, wherever he passed he was cheered by enthusiastic crowds. As he entered the castle he met another prisoner, his cousin and an old friend, the Duke of Hamilton. He, like so many others, had been but an untrustworthy servant in the beginning of the troubles, yet in the end had risked and lost everything in the royal cause. Now, seeing his King, for whose sake he was shortly to die on the scaffold, he dropped on his knees and exclaimed, "My dear master." The King embraced him and replied, "I have been so indeed to you." They were immediately afterwards parted, never to meet again. Charles passed Christmas in solitude, and two days later the Army ordered that all ceremonies were to be forborne in his presence and nearly all his attendants dismissed. For the next three weeks he spent most of his time reading the Bible and the plays of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson. On January 19 he was brought to London and that night slept at St. James's Palace.

Next morning, sixty-eight representatives of

the " Commons and good people of England " met together in Westminster Hall and, having answered the roll-call and heard Lady Fairfax call out that her husband " had too much wit to be there," the President, one Bradshaw, a lawyer, commanded the prisoner to be brought in. The King thereupon entered, guarded by thirty soldiers, and was led to a chair facing his judges. After surveying them with a stern gaze, he sat down, still keeping his hat on and without showing them the slightest deference while he listened to the reading of the charge. Towards the end came his impeachment on behalf of the people of England as a " tyrant, traitor, and murderer," at which he laughed aloud.

When commanded to answer the accusations in the charge, he replied by challenging the authority of the court. " I am entrusted with the liberty of my people, I do stand more for the liberties of my people than anyone that is seated here as a judge. Therefore show me by what lawful authority I am seated here and I will answer it. . . . Otherwise I betray my trust." Bradshaw, of course, had no lawful authority to show, but this he refused to admit and was forced to adjourn the court. Evidently he and his associates attached the greatest importance to gaining their victim's acknowledgment of their jurisdiction. Throughout his trial they endeavoured to induce him to plead, and thereby admit the legality of their proceedings.

The following day, a Sunday, Hugh Peters, the favourite Army chaplain, preached a rousing sermon on binding their kings in chains and their nobles in links of iron. On Monday, the 22nd,

Charles was again brought before the court, and again, in the name of the liberties of the people of England, he refused to acknowledge its authority. In spite of his fatigue – for with soldiers keeping guard within his bedroom he had not lain down for two nights – he was looking, not only well, but resolute and in complete self-possession. Still refusing to plead, nor disguising his contempt for his judges, he “required time to give his reasons.” “Sir,” retorted Bradshaw, “it is not for prisoners to require.”

“Sir,” exclaimed the King, “I am not an ordinary prisoner. . . . You never heard my reasons yet.”

“Your reasons are not to be heard against the highest jurisdiction.”

The King pounced on him. “Show me that highest jurisdiction where reason is not to be heard.” Bradshaw could only order the soldiers to take away the prisoner. He left the hall among the cheers of the crowd, mingled with cries for “Justice on the traitor” from the officers, one of whom spat in his face.

The next day, the 23rd, the King again refused to plead and was remanded till the 27th. In the interim the commissioners met privately, nominally to examine witnesses for the accusation, but largely to secure signatories for the death-warrant which was being prepared. There was an evident desire on the part of many of the judges to evade their duties at the last minute, but the organisers of the whole business saw to it that sixty-seven appeared on the final day of the trial. This was Saturday, the 27th, and the King, after a fruitless effort to speak, was forced to sit down and listen

to Bradshaw's rhetoric. His preamble was enlivened by another protest from Lady Fairfax. When the name of the people of England was invoked, she called out, "Not half nor a quarter of them. Oliver Cromwell is a traitor." "Shoot the whore!" shouted an officer to his men. There was a scuffle, but in the confusion Lady Fairfax managed to slip away.

Bradshaw could now proceed, but first the King nearly threw the court into confusion by an appeal to defend himself before the Lords and Commons. One of the commissioners, John Downes, was so moved that he protested against the impending sentence. In vain Cromwell begged him to be quiet, the court had to be adjourned, while the commissioners bullied Downes out of his scruples. Then they returned, and Bradshaw, prefacing it with a very long and tedious speech, read out the sentence of death. When he had finished and all the commissioners had stood up to record their approbation the King again tried to speak, but his judges were not going to prolong the risk. They knew too well the sympathy of the people was with him. Bradshaw called to the guards to remove the prisoner and they hurriedly dragged him away, drowning his protests with shouts of "Justice!" and "Execution!" But as he left the hall his voice was heard to exclaim above the uproar, "I am not suffered for to speak! Expect what justice other people will have!"

The next day, a Sunday, he was for the first time since he left the Isle of Wight allowed the ministrations of an Anglican priest – the Bishop of London, Juxon – while Hugh Peters, near by,

preaching to the soldiers, raved once more on the iniquities of their victim. On Monday, the eve of his execution, Charles said good-bye to his only two children who remained in England, Elizabeth and Henry. He warned his nine-year-old son not to allow the Army to make him a puppet King while his elder brothers were alive. Whereupon the child, sighing, said, "I will be torn in pieces first." Charles refused to see any other friends, as he wished to save all his strength for the morrow's ordeal.

In the Painted Chamber at Whitehall the death-warrant lay on a table, and throughout that same Monday the chief organisers were feverishly seeking signatories. They were hard put to it to find, even among the judges, more than twenty willing to affix their names. Cromwell was especially busy hunting up the faint-hearted, and was heard calling at the door of the House of Commons, "Those that are gone in shall set their hands. I will have their hands now." At one moment in the Painted Chamber his agitation found an outlet in a strange, hysterical piece of horseplay: he and Marten, a dissolute member of Parliament, inked each other's face with the judicial pens. And indeed there was cause for his agitation. A special embassy had arrived from Holland to plead for the King's life, the Presbyterian divines had added their prayers, so had Fairfax, while the Prince of Wales had sent a blank sheet of paper with his name signed at the bottom - to be filled up by his enemies with any terms they wished. Nine-tenths of the people were against Cromwell, but he had put a sword into the hand of the tenth man and none dared

challenge him. In the end, with the aid of cajolery and bullying, fifty-nine of the judges were persuaded to sign the death-warrant.

The next morning, January 30, the King rose early and prayed for an hour with Bishop Juxon. Shortly before ten o'clock, an officer came to the door, and with him the King descended into the courtyard, where he was met by a regiment of foot. In their midst he walked across St. James's Park, their colours flying and drums beating, Bishop Juxon next behind him, and Colonel Tomlinson — who had charge of him — talking to him bareheaded. He walked fast, as was usual to him, and called to his guard "in a pleasant manner to 'march apace'." It was bitter weather, the Thames was frozen over, and the spectators who had gathered in thousands in Whitehall were numb with cold before the prisoner stepped out on to the scaffold from a window in the Banqueting Hall. He had remained for nearly four hours in the palace alone with Bishop Juxon, though some Presbyterian ministers had knocked at the door and asked permission to pray with him. "Tell them," said Charles, "that they that have so often and causelessly prayed against me shall never pray with me in this agony. They may, if they please, pray for me."

The scaffold was railed round and hung with black, and raised high above the heads of the onlookers. Between the King and his subjects the serried ranks of cavalry and infantry held all but their prisoner in awe. He had hoped to make a last apologia to his people, but, seeing that they would not be able to hear him, he

addressed his words to the few soldiers and the bishop who stood with him on the scaffold.

First he denied that he had begun the war, and yet, "for all this, God forbid that I should be so ill a Christian as not to say God's judgments are just upon me. . . . An unjust sentence that I suffered to take effect is punished now by an unjust sentence upon me." At last he had fully paid his debt to Strafford's injured spirit. He then told his captors that they would never be in the right way till they gave God His due, the King his due, and the people their due. "For the people . . . I must tell you that their liberty and freedom consists in having of government those laws by which their life and their goods may be most their own. It is not for having share in government, that is nothing pertaining to them. A sovereign and a subject are clean different things. . . . Sirs, it was for this that now I am come here. If I would have given way to an arbitrary way, for to have all laws changed according to the power of the sword, I needed not to have come here. And therefore I tell you, and I pray God it be not laid to your charge, that I am the martyr of the people."

Then he spoke of his faith in the Church in which he had been bred, and soon he knelt down and rested his neck on the low block. A masked executioner struck off his head at one blow and showed it silently to the mighty crowd. A terrible groan broke from them, such a sound as one who heard it prayed never to hear again. Immediately afterwards the soldiers rode up towards Charing Cross and down towards Westminster to scatter and subdue the people.



## EPILOGUE

It is generally argued that King Charles's downfall and death were due to his untrustworthy character and failure to keep in touch with national feeling. It is true that when a prisoner he bargained first with one party, then with another, not meaning in the end to bind himself permanently to any, but only wishing to use them to regain his throne. The same might be said of his opponents, who were all trying to use him as a pawn and fell away from him when they discovered how firm after all were his underlying principles. Actually it was his devotion to the idea of monarchy and the English Church which handicapped him so hopelessly against a leader like Cromwell, who did not believe in the importance of any institution, preferring to base his conduct on his own interpretation of God's Will, in moments of crisis prone to be narrowed down to the preservation of God's man.

As for Charles's patriotism, it was no more nor less than the average cultivated man's of that time. Extreme nationalism was certainly growing into an important force in England, but, among the upper classes, it had not yet reached the violence it has since attained. The hatred of foreigners felt by provincial Englishmen was almost as keen between inhabitants of different counties as of different countries, and would have been despised by the more travelled and educated. Of course, it was useful propaganda against the

King that he employed Irishmen and Scotchmen in his army and tried to engage Frenchmen and Danes ; but it must be remembered that the rebels were the first to bring in the Scotch and would not have hesitated to introduce other nationalities if it had been possible. Foreign mercenaries were commonly used by all Governments in the seventeenth century, and it was a sign of Cromwell's genius that he fanned the new spirit of nationalism and created a professional English Army which triumphed everywhere.

In fact, the King was destroyed by the rising tide of individualism, political and religious, and, though he might have saved his life if he had been cleverer and less principled, he could not have saved the monarchy. After all, it was not the power that brought him to the scaffold that ultimately triumphed, but the power that impeached Strafford and Laud and voted the Petition of Right and the Grand Remonstrance. As soon as Cromwell was dead the Army and Levellers were swept away by the Royalists and Presbyterians uniting on the crest of a great wave of reaction which restored Charles II to the throne. The old Parliament, which Pride had purged and Cromwell contemptuously dismissed, re-emerged and really ruled the country. Charles II, with a good deal of skill, kept up the struggle against Parliamentary supremacy, but James II was more moral and quite unskilful, and with his flight (forty years after his father's death) monarchical government disappeared in England.

When everything has been said against Charles I — that he was pedantic and misanthropic, rigid

in thought and vacillating in action — there remains the bright remembrance of his patience and magnanimity, his loyalty to a vision. He had another quality, and a rare one : the feeling for beauty in both words and deeds — a sense of style.

Those who knew him best felt that in his death his subjects had suffered an irreparable loss. The emotion was shared by many of his political antagonists, and by none more keenly than James Harrington, the republican philosopher. He had been chosen by Parliament to attend the King at Holmby and was dismissed in those last weeks at Windsor because he would not promise not to help the prisoner to escape. Charles loved his company and often they disputed together on various questions of government. For his part, Harrington became passionately devoted to the King, whose death, he confessed afterwards, “ gave him so great grief that he contracted a disease by it ; that never anything did go so near to him.”<sup>1</sup>

Such feelings were general throughout the country, then and later, in very different minds from Harrington’s, and are, perhaps, best expressed in the old rhyme :

*As I was going by Charing Cross  
I saw a black rider on a black horse.  
They told me it was King Charles the First.  
Oh dear ! My heart was ready to burst.*

<sup>1</sup> J. Aubrey, *Brief Lives*.

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With him died all chance of success in war. He had failed to relieve Rochelle a year ago. Lindsey, his successor in command, did even less. Richelieu had blocked the harbour-mouth with a dyke, and Lindsey could not induce the English ships to go within range of its batteries. La Rochelle surrendered to Richelieu and was generously treated. The political power of the Huguenots was broken, and King Louis respected their religion. If his son had done the same, one might say that King Charles had been fighting for nothing. Certainly his other quarrels were easily adjusted, and peace was made. Soon Rubens would come to England and negotiate a peace with Spain. The Dutch had captured a Spanish treasure-fleet and were beginning to despise our aid. The German Protestants were about to find a new saviour in Gustavus Adolphus, a surer paymaster in Richelieu. The war against the Hapsburgs went on, but without English intervention.

Europe might despise Charles for letting his subjects dictate to him, instead of establishing a despotism after the contemporary fashion. But no one abroad understood King Charles's problems. He had come to an understanding with Parliament, the feverish need for money was abating. So long as the Commons refrained from pressing their unwarranted claims about the Customs, there was life yet in the old system of government by King and Parliament. There were many hopeful signs. Buckingham was dead, and Charles was never to have a favourite again. Bristol was in favour at Court, as was Archbishop Abbot, recently under a cloud. The most powerful minister was Treasurer Weston, a moderate if uninspiring person. Time and chance were removing the worst consequences of King Charles's youth and King James's age. All might yet be well.

The Court had meanwhile obtained one recruit who was to prove the most important of all. Charles was so seldom blessed with an eye for the right man that this

instance is worth recording. Three years ago, when it was proposed to exclude inconvenient opponents from the Commons by making them sheriffs, Charles had hesitated at Wentworth's name. "But Wentworth," he said, "is an honest gentleman." Now the time was ripe for an alliance. The Petition was passed, Parliament had granted the King money: Wentworth could not follow the Commons farther along the road they had chosen. He cared for nothing except good government: he cannot have wished to attack the King's right to levy Customs: he disliked Puritans: he disliked theological controversy. He had often petitioned for office under the Government. Now he became Baron Wentworth: he would soon be a Privy Councillor, then President of the Council for the North, Lord Deputy of Ireland, finally Earl of Strafford.

It has been said that he only accepted Court favour from motives of personal ambition, and that he waited until Buckingham's death had cleared the path to supreme power. It is quite false, for he took over his title and all that it entailed a month before Buckingham's death. The fact that this libel has been repeated, in Green's *Short History*, to the tune of 32,000 copies in one year, may help to explain the popular estimate of Wentworth, and of his master.

There is a tradition that one man was for ever antagonized by the so-called apostasy. The story tells of a meeting at Greenwich between Wentworth and Pym. Wentworth began to speak of the prospects of peace and co-operation between Court and Parliament, but Pym interrupted with the frankest expression of party spirit. All this fine talk could only mean that Wentworth was leaving his friends. "But," said Pym, "I will never leave you while your head is upon your shoulders." If the story is true, it was thirteen years before Pym accomplished his purpose.

There was talk of trying to buy over other members of the Opposition, and even Eliot's name was mentioned.



We do not know whether any offers were made. Pym and Eliot remained in opposition, and could generally command a majority. The King's servants in the Commons were feeble antagonists in debate. Wentworth's absence did not make for peace or moderation. The tendencies he deplored were soon to have free play ; they had perhaps grown stronger during the recess between the two sessions.

The King had done one provocative thing : he had repudiated Mainwaring's doctrines, but he had granted him a pardon and a new living. Otherwise he had attempted conciliation. He published a proclamation to discourage theological controversy in the Church, since it engendered bitterness and distracted the clergy from their more important duties. As the Commons complained of " innovations," by which they meant Arminianism, he forbade all innovations : the Church must work by its ancient Prayer Book. The Commons took the proclamation as a red rag rather than an olive branch. The King's attempt to enforce the Prayer Book rubrics in the interests of decency and an orderly ceremonial were to them Popish innovations. They pushed their doubtful claims to control Church government, assuring the King that they knew best how to obtain a godly and learned ministry. Charles had already raised the standard of godliness and learning among the clergy. The real question was whether the Church should grow more or less Puritan.

Even less successful were Charles's attempts to get the Customs question settled. Encouraged by Parliament's manœuvres and by the very human desire to pay as few taxes as possible, the London merchants had been resisting Tonnage and Poundage during the recess. Charles had their goods held in bond, until Parliament should decide the question. Conciliation could hardly go farther, in a matter affecting about half his ordinary revenue and threatening the very existence of monarchy.

It remained to be seen whether the Commons would

drop their dishonest contention that Tonnage and Poundage was barred by the Petition of Right. They did so, but it was only to raise a more foolish claim. They discovered that one of the merchants whose goods were in bond was a member of the Commons. They advanced a new and startling argument that the property of members as well as their persons must be free from interference, even in a Parliamentary recess. They postponed all discussion of principle, and summoned Customs officials to the bar for daring to touch the goods of a "Parliament man." If they had wanted to, they could hardly have supplied Charles with clearer evidence that they were defending the privileges of a close ring, rather than the liberties of England.

As the debates proceeded, Eliot outbid Pym for leadership, and proceedings grew more melodramatic. There was new talk of a Jesuit saved from execution by a royal reprieve, of Arminian innovators promoted to bishoprics, of Popish books licensed for the Press. The King, hoping to cool hot heads, ordered an adjournment, then a re-adjournment till "Tuesday come sevensnight." Then Eliot took the decisive step: he defied the order. He rose to propose a new motion. Speaker Finch refused to listen; the House, he said, must adjourn itself at the King's order; he rose to go. Still Eliot persisted, though his old friends would not support him, and Pym sat silent. Up sprang Ben Valentine, member for Eliot's old constituency of St. Germans. He seized Speaker Finch and held him down in the chair. With him was Lord Clare's son, Denzil Holles. "Gog's wowns," said Holles, "you shall sit till we please to rise!" Scandalized members who tried to release the Speaker were hurled back to their seats. Never had St. Stephen's Chapel witnessed such a scene. Eliot was talking about Popery again, and inveighing against the bishops. He suddenly suggested the impeachment of the inoffensive Weston, in whom he saw the ghost of Buckingham and "the head of all the Papists."

Then came a great knocking on the door ; the King had sent a sergeant to remove the mace. Eliot had him sent back and the doors locked. It was Black Rod who knocked next, and with him was a guard to force the locks. While they battered, Holles rose to put a motion of Eliot's proposing. Religious innovators were capital enemies to King and Commonwealth : any man who had a hand in levying Tonnage and Poundage was in like case : a merchant who paid Customs was "a betrayer of the liberties of England." Then the doors were flung open, and Black Rod entered. The third Parliament was at an end.

Charles had failed. The first breach with the Commons had widened through three years : the Petition of Right had only pasted paper over the crack, and now it was irreparable. In a long and very able proclamation he stated his case, not altogether unfairly. He claimed to have expended all his energy on the war and every penny he possessed, while the Commons disgraced England and betrayed the Protestant cause. They had blamed all evil on to Buckingham, but redoubled their efforts against Royal servants when Buckingham was dead. They had dealt unjustly with him in the matter of the Customs. When they had at last voted a subsidy, their factious example had encouraged the local assessors to collect it dishonestly and corruptly, robbing the Exchequer. Meanwhile the Commons had interfered with the proper working of administration, kept Customs officials hanging round the House for a month, committed the Sheriff of London to the Tower ; they had nosed their way among Treasury officials, called the Attorney-General to order, destroyed the prestige of the judges. Finally, they had fouled their own nest by causing riot in the House. The "many religious, grave, and well-minded men" in the Commons had been "overborne by the practices and clamours of the others." Delinquents would be punished. Meanwhile let England, instead of magnifying her few grievances,

compare her happy lot to the misery of the Continent, trust her King to maintain Justice, Liberty, and the Gospel, and be thankful to God for "the great peace and quietness which every man enjoyeth under his own vine and fig-tree."

The threatened punishments were few and mild. It is sometimes said that the Tudors succeeded where the Stewarts failed because Tudor rule was based on the consent of England. But Elizabeth had had to imprison members of the Commons, and one died in prison, though he has never been acclaimed as a martyr to liberty. And the Tudors, finding their chief opponents among the Peers, had been able to kill the bolder of them in great number. Charles himself shrank from bloodshed, his opponents from incurring proved treason (though that had not saved some of Henry VIII's victims), and no one was put to death for politics until Parliament killed Strafford. It was Civil War and the Restoration which began a new age of executions.

Charles contemplated nothing extreme, and got himself into difficulties by trying to preserve legality and uphold the Petition of Right. The effort put him technically in the wrong and involved, for the second time, the dismissal of a judge. The prisoners, charged in Star Chamber with "conspiracy to bring government into contempt," were transferred to the ordinary law courts: they denied that any court had jurisdiction over things said and done in Parliament. Four were fined; imprisonment awaited only those responsible for the last disturbance in Parliament, and submission, with an acknowledgment of error, meant release. Two refused to give it, and remained eleven years in prison; Holles escaped abroad; Eliot, most defiant and most high-minded, was released by death, no doubt hastened by imprisonment. Between Eliot and Charles there could be no peace. Eliot had been Buckingham's friend, and Buckingham had launched him on his career. He had turned against his patron, for good motives

or evil, called him poisoner, attempted his impeachment. Eliot's death was the signal for one of the rare acts of cruelty in Charles's life. When young Eliot asked leave to take his father's remains to the family resting-place in Cornwall, his petition was endorsed with the words: "Lett Sir John Eliot be buried in the Church of that parishe where he dyed." Eliot sleeps in the Tower, with Raleigh and Anne Boleyn.

And meanwhile the doors of St. Stephen's Chapel were locked, and for eleven long years they saw no debates except in the parliament of spiders and of mice.

## CHAPTER TEN

### PORTRAIT OF A KING

1600-49

ENGLAND was to be ruled by her King. There was no law to compel him to call another Parliament, only ancient custom which he had decided for the present to defy. Some men thought he was merely waiting until circumstances changed and fresh elections were likely to provide a less obstructive majority in the Commons. Others suspected him of hoping that oblivion would creep over the whole idea of Parliament and open the way for despotism. Probably Charles had no consistent plan in the matter. But whatever his intentions, or even his character, they were still a puzzle to the majority of his subjects. England was ruled by an enigma.

The passing of three centuries, the ebb and flow of hostile prejudices, have obscured rather than cleared up the mystery. King Charles's character is still a matter of debate, far more so than that of his fascinating son. One may value Charles II high or low, one cannot doubt what manner of man he was; but estimates of Charles I differ beyond hope of reconciliation. It is worth while going a long way round to arrive at some firm picture. It may emerge from a study of the King during his unparliamentary years.

The best side of him appears in his relations with wife and children. His quarrels with Henrietta were all forgotten; they were fast friends as well as lovers. She had escaped a considerable danger, about the time of the French peace treaty. A child was expected, but something was going amiss. Henrietta's attendants attributed the

trouble to her insistence on walking everywhere, instead of taking a coach. Then she was badly scared by her dogs suddenly beginning to fight in her room. She was brought to bed prematurely. Charles implored the physicians to save her at any cost ; he might have another heir, never such another wife. The child came into the world, to live only two hours. But Henrietta was safe.

A year later, the heir was born. Henrietta was extremely proud of him, though she had to admit him dark and ugly ; and he was " very serious in all he does." Such was the first woman's appraisal of King Charles II, at the tender age of one. Her trouble with him later was that he refused to take medicine. Little Charles was to have two brothers and three sisters, and the whole family was united by a very strong affection. It is perhaps significant that jars did not begin to divide them nor Henrietta to show an unpleasing side of her nature until her husband was in the grave.

Charles was happy not only in his family but also in his relations with every sort of artist. There have been many kings who have patronized art from a sense of duty or ostentation, few to do so from real kinship and understanding of artists.

He was fond of the theatre, but unfortunate in his period. Like so much else, the theatre had decayed during his father's reign ; there was a growing insistence on the inessentials of costume and decoration, and Inigo Jones was almost as important a figure as the dramatists. Ben Jonson survived through the first ten years of the reign, but his best work was done. Webster and Ford still wrote good tragedies, but they worked along a narrower, more morbid groove than Shakespeare. The comic writers lost gusto and virility without losing lewdness. They were still interested in the great emotion which makes men and women share a lifetime, and not preoccupied with the instinct that brings them together for a night. But they lacked the gay wit and adamant style whereby the

Restoration dramatists were to make that instinct a matter of enduring artistic importance.

There were few great names in music : Orlando Gibbons died while composing music for Henrietta's welcome to England ; there were William and Henry Lawes, and a Mr. John Cooper, disguised, after the manner of his profession, as Signior Giovanni Coperario. But we boasted of being a musical nation, the standard of execution seems to have been high, and music was more of a habit among rich and poor than it has been in succeeding centuries. Charles, something of a connoisseur, did much to encourage good music in the churches. It was here that Puritanism was beginning to oppose it. Charles was perhaps all the less sympathetic to opposition for being excellently served in his own royal chapels and ignorant of the distracting effect of less able performers in the village choir. But, being the man he was, he could hardly fail to dislike the spirit which inspired the attack. It was to grow more powerful after his death, and end in the nineteenth century (it is hard to believe it nowadays) with one religious community expelling a girl for taking lessons in the piano.

But it is as a lover of painting that Charles remains really remarkable, and unrivalled among English kings. Contemporary rivals he certainly had, among them Richelieu and King Philip. Like them, Charles had agents all over Europe, and competition was brisk, though the prices paid were inconsiderable by the standards of a modern auction-room. At home his chief adviser was a Dutchman called Gerbier, who had once served Buckingham and attempted to educate Buckingham's erratic taste. It was to Buckingham that Gerbier wrote in praise of collecting pictures and against "those facetious folk who say it is money cast away on shadows. I know that they will be pictures still, when those ignorants will be less than shadows." Gerbier was himself an artist (besides writing on political economy, the science of fortification, and the education of the young), and he painted a miniature of



King Charles. Charles employed him also as an ambassador, at first to treat with Rubens, later with evil consequences : for Gerbier sold his master's secrets for gold.

The royal collection, in an age when reputations were less fixed, was resplendent with famous names. Mantegna's and Giorgione's recur often in the catalogue. The greatest prizes were seven Raphael cartoons, still the property of England.<sup>1</sup> But there is no doubt where Charles's heart lay—partly with Correggio of Parma, more with the great Venetians ; his collection of Titian and Tintoretto was unequalled. Such a taste is perhaps characteristic of a mind not so much interested in the world that is as in the splendours of the world as it should be. But Charles was founding an English tradition ; we have always cared more for colour than for form, as well as shown more talent in manipulating it ; for nearly two centuries after Charles, most Englishmen looked on Venice as the centre of the artistic world.

Most collectors hanker for the service of some living artist, and kings can be choosers. James had employed Mytens, not without great talents, though he could make nothing of Prince Charles but a stiff picture of a stiff and gawky youth. Now Mytens was growing old. Charles, delighted with Rubens's visit to England as Spanish ambassador, tried to get him to stay as Court painter, and gave him an English knighthood. But Sir Peter Paul was loyal to Brussels and to his distant employer. At home in Madrid, King Philip had something of a monopoly in Velasquez. Charles wrote to Franz Hals, but Hals was unwilling to leave the merry and boisterous life which so scandalized the trim burghers of Haarlem. But Rubens had suggested a young assistant of his own, Henry Vandyke.

It was a lucky choice. Vandyke had been in England before, and James had rather inconsiderately set him to

<sup>1</sup> Cromwell saved them when Charles's collection was sold up by Parliament. They are at present in the South Kensington Museum.

copy other men's pictures. Now a specimen of his growing powers convinced Mytens that he was superseded, and he asked for leave to go home and end his days in Holland. Vandyke was given a pension, a knighthood, and a house at Blackfriars. But for two short visits to the Continent, he stayed there for all that was left of his short life. Seldom has there been such loving sympathy between artist and patron. If Vandyke idealized his subjects (and little Princess Sophia accused him of flattering Aunt Henrietta) it was to paint a pæan in praise of refinement, breeding, and intelligence. There is something frail but very lovely in the world that Vandyke depicted in his portraits. It is the world in which King Charles moved, perhaps dangerously isolated from ugliness and stupidity. It still remains for any one who wishes to see his friends and family, a few of his enemies, his own haunting and haunted face.

Vandyke was thirty-three when he came to Blackfriars; he had only nine years to live. He had always had poor health and was harassed by poverty and worries. When Charles asked why his pension and earnings could not keep him out of debt, Vandyke replied that he soon got rid of money in keeping "open table for his friends and open purse for his mistresses. Charles's remedy was a characteristic one: he and Henrietta put their heads together and decided to bring their friend into the paths of thrift and virtue by marrying him to a Scotswoman—Mary Ruthven, of ancient lineage. When Vandyke's latest mistress heard of the betrothal, she tried, in revenge, to stab and disable that cunning right hand by which his genius expressed itself. She failed, and disappears into oblivion. But within a year of marriage Vandyke was dying. Charles offered £1500 to any doctor who could save him, but none of them could earn the reward. Vandyke's gentle spirit passed away from an England already threatened with the shadow of Civil War.

After Charles, Vandyke's best friend had been the Earl of Arundel. This strange and restless creature, proud

and self-important, curiously erratic in his culture, was never quite at home in England, perhaps not quite at home upon this planet. He had been a friend of Prince Henry, but something divided him from Charles. His taste in painting was too catholic to be fashionable, but he may have taught the King to appreciate the Dürers he gave him, the inherited Holbeins, the one Rembrandt in the royal collection. But the two men differed in their view of art, as in their temperament. Indeed, it is a sign of the period that men were much in doubt as to what was art and what was not. Both Charles and Arundel had grasped the notion, by no means self-evident to the contemporary Englishman, that pictures have an intrinsic standard of their own, apart from their value as records or their place in a scheme of decoration. Outside the sphere of painting, Arundel seems to have been caught in the stream of the later Renaissance, somewhat muddled by its taste for the merely curious. Though Arundel had fine taste, he is probably more responsible than any other man for the habit of collecting things of no practical use and doubtful artistry; he plays his part in the actions and reactions which gradually transformed the sparse dignity of Elizabethan interiors into the huddled monstrosity of the Victorian drawing-room.

While Arundel collected foreign curios, England was doing excellent work in applied art, and the adornment of the things of everyday life. There was a high standard in costume and furniture; in Charles's reign, and probably through his influence, heraldic design took a last turn for the better; silver-work, shedding its Elizabethan extravagances, enjoyed an Indian summer, with the melting-pots of the Civil War already grinning for its destruction. Charles seems to have been happy in the company of craftsmen. Sir Philip Warwick draws a delightful picture of his conversing with them, as with scholars and artists, willing to learn and yet shedding fresh light on their problems himself, never differing from them without a

modest apology and a statement of his reasons for disagreement.

Arundel's search for oddities produced one find, not in Italy but on his own Shropshire estates. The curio is known to history as "Old Parr," and he was brought up to London for King Charles to see. Parr never knew how old he was, but the neighbours and parish authorities dated him 1483. In actual fact he seems to have lived upwards of 130 years, and he was still jovial. Even in the presence of this remarkable feat Charles appears to have been obsessed with its moral aspects. "You have lived longer than other men," he said to Parr; "what have you done more than they?" Parr, refusing to be put out, replied that he had got a wench with child when he was over a hundred, and done public penance for the deed. He told the King about the dissolution of the monasteries, which he remembered perfectly. Asked what his own religion had been through a century of reform and counter-reform, he replied that it had always been the religion of the Government. "I came raw into the world," he said, "and I count it no point of wisdom to be broiled out of it." But his common sense was not proof against the temptations of being a lion in London. Vandyke painted his portrait, and made an Old Testament prophet of him; but in a few months he had gone out of the world, still raw. Dr. Harvey, discoverer of the circulation of the blood, was among Charles's protégés, and had the run of the royal parks for zoological research: now he was allowed to conduct a post-mortem on old Parr. He diagnosed "change of air" as the chief cause of death, but added a rider that the rich foods and late hours of London had something to do with Parr's belated demise.

Among such pleasant and curious paths we have perhaps strayed too far from the high road. A king's first business is to govern men. It is time to ask why this excellent husband and father, this patron of enlightenment, and friend of artists, had such ill-fortune in his kingship.

It has been assumed by those who study nothing but his politics that Charles was a stupid man—too narrowly stupid even to know when he was in the wrong. This oversimplified theory has been made to fit the broad, political facts: it is applied to them unswervingly—though not without difficulties—through the many volumes of Gardiner's great history. It is hard to reconcile with all we know of the King's private life; and there is another more serious difficulty. It is contradicted by the recorded opinion of contemporaries. Some hated him, a few, especially in his later days of suffering, came to love him dearly. His enemies call him crafty and tyrannical, the less well-informed thought him frivolous and even cruel. No one suggests he was unintelligent.

The impression of those who met him is rather an opposite one. He was shy, and men expected to find him stiff and uninteresting. They spoke with him and found that the reverse was true.

It is probable that his mind, like his body, was late in developing. It was said, when he was twenty-three, that the ride to Madrid had begun to make a man out of a backward youth. Born to a position which demands quick decisions, he seems to have been cursed with the critical mind. For a scholar and a lover of art, he writes a curiously uncreative style, always clear (in an age of tortuous English), but seldom pleasing and very seldom eloquent. He was always strong in argument, but particularly so in picking out the weak spots in an adversary's case. It is possible that he saw, only too clearly, the weak spots in his own, for it had the essential weakness of everything uncreative. He had no way of opposing the innovations of his enemies except by appealing to an ancient machinery of government which their manœuvres were making unworkable. If he felt such a weakness, he may also have felt that a king cannot afford to entertain such thoughts, and grown into a habit of crushing them down, and clinging desperately to the knowledge that his own intentions were

excellent, that events would one day justify them. The suggestion is made for what it is worth. It would reconcile some apparent inconsistencies.

To say that he failed to recognize the signs of the times is to beg the question. To say that he underrated the importance of Parliament is to read history backwards. On the Continent the signs of the times pointed to a decay of parliaments, and it would have been a bold prophet who could be sure that the English Crown would not defeat its Parliament's claim to sovereignty. Indeed, it is possible that Charles could have done so, but for a smaller but a real miscalculation in Scottish affairs, due to ignorance of conditions in Scotland. Parliament has now been sovereign for so long that we regard its advance as inevitable. It would make for a fairer estimate of Charles if we could forget the last three centuries of history and try to recapture the atmosphere in which he lived. He shared his error—if it be an error—with the greatest mind that this country has produced. Shakespeare was only thirty-six years older than Charles, and it was in Shakespeare's England that Charles grew to manhood. Shakespeare wrote much on political themes, yet he seems to see deliberative assemblies merely as instruments used by great men for personal ends. Charles, after an experience of three Parliaments, came to a similar conclusion, and regarded those personal ends as something it was his duty to resist. No doubt there were other and better forces working alongside the evil ones, as Charles himself expressly recognized. But he thought the institution as a whole was more of a national danger than an inspiration. He was perhaps wrong. But if the reader thinks his view as groundless and as criminally ignorant as it is sometimes represented, this book will have been written in vain.

If there is something to be said for Charles's general principles, contemporary evidence supplies one excellent reason for his many practical mistakes. Clarendon and Bulstrode say that, though his judgment was sound, the

King distrusted it himself, and yielded to the opinion of minds inferior to his own. Enemies say the same. St. John told a Presbyterian friend that "the King had an unhappiness in adhering and unweariedly pursuing the advices of others, and mistrusting his own." Cromwell is more brutally frank; if Charles had trusted his own judgment, he said, he would have fooled them all.<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps permissible to follow the modern fashion and trace this weakness to a very early source. Charles's childhood was an unfortunate one. He was cursed with a stammer, for years he was almost a cripple; the comparison of his own lot with that of his luckier brother would help to destroy self-confidence, while an innate fastidiousness and love of virtue isolated him in James's vulgar, boisterous, and immoral Court. The death of his brother, the departure of his sister to foreign lands, coincided with the coming of a new fear—the fear of a great responsibility, looming nearer as his father grew old. Then Buckingham dawned upon him, splendidly self-confident; a rather lonely heart opened up to an undreamt-of affection, a new hold upon life. His idol was far from flawless, but Charles's nature, desperately loyal, refused to acknowledge the flaws, and turned bitterly against those who tried to make the most of them. When they became too obvious to be ignored, Charles had already formed the habit of relying on outside advice. The shock of his friend's murder confirmed his opinion of his adversaries' wickedness, but could not make him self-reliant. He was by nature hasty. Many men have attained real greatness by acting solely on impulse. But Charles, cursed with the analytical mind, could not trust his own impulses. The moment he began to act, he began to doubt; he drew back, listened to conflicting advice, floundered into contradictions, into apparent or real dishonesty. His whole mental and moral equipment was that of the scholar, the counsellor, the critic. In quieter times it might have seen him through a happy and

<sup>1</sup> Carte's *Ormond*, ii. p. 12. See Hume, vii. 519.

prosperous reign, until he bequeathed a not ill-governed kingdom to his adroiter, self-confident, less scrupulous son. It could not fit him to deal with the peculiar problems of his times. It destroyed English monarchy.

One more thing is needed to complete the picture. Charles has been accused of a lack of imagination, and the criticism seems unjust. Humour he certainly lacked, and the balance that goes with humour; he was a Scotsman. But it might be truer to say that he was actually betrayed by an excess of imagination, especially in the days when he rode to Madrid to heal the strifes of Europe or, a few months later, pictured himself as the champion of Protestantism. When hard facts cured him of such dreams, his imagination began to play on a romantic conception of the Church and of himself as its rejuvenator. It is the one dream of King Charles which was and is a reality. If he could have seen modern England (with all its faults) plentifully supplied with churches in which a well-educated clergy worships God in the words of his beloved Prayer Book, more regularly and with greater ceremony than his own age permitted, he would ask indignantly why any one counted him a failure. It is the literary fashion to-day to sneer at the whole institution, and to talk loudly of empty churches without going to see how surprisingly full many of them are. The phase may pass. Meanwhile England has a Church and a ministry and sacraments; the humble can always find what they seek; and if the indifferent should one day turn back to the tradition upon which our whole civilization rests, they may be glad to find that tradition unbroken and surviving in forms which King Charles consecrated by his life-work and cemented with his blood.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### UNPARLIAMENTARY

1629-37

WHEN a king of Charles's virtues, vices, and aspirations begins to govern without Parliamentary check, the choice of ministers for Church and State becomes a matter of crucial importance. It was partly Charles's fault, partly his misfortune, that, apart from Laud and Wentworth, he was served by men of mediocre ability and uninspiring character. The majority of them do not seem to have been any more capable or honest than the men who exercise power in our own times. King James's rule had not been the sort to bring talent or virtue into places where it is noticed, and it had put a high premium on dishonest intrigue. It was said of Charles by one who knew him that "no temptation could dispose him to a wrongful action, except it was so disguised from him that he believed it to be just." The judgment is perhaps over-charitable. But certainly there were at Court too many experts in the fashioning of such disguises.

The department most free from these tamperings was the Church. Its nominal head was Archbishop Abbot, a man of strong principle and sterling worth, but inclined to lethargy, devoid of all charm and rather barren of intellect. He was nearly seventy, and very suspicious of anything reminiscent of Rome. Charles, unable to see eye to eye with him, was already relying on Laud, whom he had made Bishop of London. Laud's influence was all for a tightening of discipline in the Church, for enforcing regularity, efficiency, and certain not very extreme forms of ceremonial; men must kneel to receive Communion,

the table must be at the east end (not in the nave for people to use as a hat-rack), and the clergymen must wear surplices. This campaign, and its political implications, is too important to be summarized here. We shall hear more than enough of it later.

Of the lay ministers, Weston the Treasurer was the most important. He had been a time-serving courtier of King James and a client of Buckingham: Charles accepted him for his ability with "resignation" rather than "affection." Henrietta detested him. He was unpopular, partly because his wife was a Papist; he tried to make up for it by exacting strictly the Penal Law fines. He curried favour and insulted men by turns; he was terrified of those he had offended. He was something of an old woman. Clarendon tells a good story of Weston promising to befriend a certain Mr. Cæsar, scribbling a memorandum about him and dropping it into his pocket; weeks after he suddenly found a dirty scrap of paper marked "REMEMBER CÆSAR," and, failing to recognize his own writing, imagined that some amateur soothsayer was warning him against a plot of assassination; he had barricaded his house, armed his servants, and proclaimed a state of siege, before he discovered the mistake. It is only fair to add that he used to tell the story against himself in later years.

Short of Middlesex, he was probably the best man who could be found for the routine of his unpopular office. With no Parliamentary subsidies, Charles had to "live of his own," and his own was meagre. Courtiers' pensions were cut to the bone; many who had ruined themselves by lending money for the war were repaid slowly and in part only. It was an age of insufficient or nominal salaries, when officials and ambassadors expected unofficial pay in the form of monopolies or a grant of Crown lands. Many had grown rich in King James's time, and they still adorned Charles's Court, and kept the standard of extravagance woefully high. Holland and Carlisle astonished foreigners

with their lavishness. The latter had absorbed much Crown land from King James, and married into the wealthy family of Percy; his wife, Lucy Carlisle, was the reigning beauty of Charles's Court and knew how to spend. But to new courtiers, Charles could give little. A few made money by trade, some lost it in the same way. Most of them starved for luxuries and envied the established fortunes. Only Lord Treasurer Weston managed to build up a new one himself.

Weston had also a hand in the King's foreign policy, perhaps the worst blot on Charles's reputation as a ruler. It had no consistent principles except the now hopeless hankering to recover the Palatinate for his sister's family and a slowly growing recognition that France and Holland would soon be more powerful enemies than Spain. There was even a proposal to join Spain and help her reconquer the Dutch provinces. But nothing could be done, and Charles only humiliated himself while he painfully learnt the lesson that Europe could afford to despise a king without money and without an army. Nor were Charles's methods above the very low standard of contemporary diplomacy. It was one of his envoys, Sir Henry Wotton, who defined an ambassador as "a man sent abroad to lie for his Government."

The real need it was not in Weston, perhaps not in any one, to supply. The English Crown must remain a cipher abroad and in jeopardy at home, so long as an increasingly modern country was tied to a mediæval system of finance. Even Parliamentary subsidies were assessed on an antiquated system, perfectly unfair in incidence, and giving every opportunity to assessors with an itching palm. In a time of rising prices and growing prosperity, a subsidy yielded less and less. Charles protested against the system, James had tried to get the whole finance of the country overhauled, but, quarrelling over details with the House of Commons, he had achieved nothing.

Now that Parliamentary grants had ceased, nearly

half the revenue came from Tonnage and Poundage. The merchants made bones about paying customs and appealed to the late controversy in Parliament; for a time some refused to trade at all. But growing prosperity and the prospect of great gain soon dissuaded them.

The other half consisted of fines on criminals and Roman Catholics, the so-called "tenths and first-fruits" contributed by the clergy, and the proceeds of Crown Lands. The mediæval kings had held a large proportion of English soil, granting it away to reward friends or conciliate opponents, and recouping themselves from the lands of those who died childless or were condemned for treason. James had made lavish grants, and there had been no civil wars to extinguish the landowning families, no attainders for treason such as had enriched the Tudors. Only poor Raleigh died for treason, and he left nothing but debts.

If Charles was tied to a mediæval system of finance, he was determined to use every expedient which it suggested. He revived an old law forcing all men of considerable income to accept knighthood, and pay the appropriate fees. He began to reclaim all the forest land that had been filched from the Crown since the early Middle Ages. His servants and the lawyers carried out the process harshly and defiantly, and he must be blamed for not checking them.<sup>1</sup> Titles that had held good for three centuries were now called in question; there was a constant oscillation between the letter and the spirit of the law, according as either might favour the case for the Crown. Some of the sufferers became strong Parliamentarians, and among them were the richest and most powerful in England.

Finally, there was ship-money, the most notorious and yet the most defensible of King Charles's measures.

England needed a fleet. Her coasts and her trade were at the mercy of pirates, Moorish or Christian. Our safety

<sup>1</sup> D'Ewes (2. 136) puts all the blame on the judges and juries.

was threatened by the new navy that Richelieu was building in France. The Dutch were already strong at sea; they were carrying on war in our neutral waters, driving Englishmen from their ancient fishing-grounds, even landing to dry their nets in England and shooting at any one who tried to disturb them. To such a situation the mediæval notion, that naval protection was merely a matter for the coastwise districts, was quite inapplicable. Inland towns had naturally resisted the attempts to tax them for the upkeep of the navy: it was seventy years now since Hull had tried to make the Yorkshire manufacturing towns contribute, thirty-five since she had succeeded, thanks to the Council for the North. Charles took the decisive step: he turned ship-money, a local and sporadic levy, into a general tax on the whole country. There was opposition, first in London where it was least excusable, later in inland shires. But it died down or was overcome. Hampden was not yet ready with his protest.

One point about ship-money is often missed. It was used to build ships. The accounts are extant and they show that, apart from one small loan to the military garrison of Berwick when the Scots invaded, every penny raised during the reign went to the navy. It was not spent wisely—too much on laying down new vessels, like the magnificent *Sovereign of the Seas*, not enough on ensuring efficiency and honesty; the sailors were still shockingly treated. But ship-money laid the foundations for a real renaissance in the navy, overdue since before the Armada. If the firm of Blake Brothers, Bridgwater merchants, grumbled at the amount of ship-money they had to pay, its senior partner may have been glad in later years that King Charles had provided him with so many stout ships to lead against Van Tromp.

It would have been a hard matter to enforce ship-money, forest enlargement, or the knighthood fines without the support of the lawyers. As a body they had begun to come round to the King's side after the dissolution of the

third Parliament. Coke had gone into retirement at Stoke Poges, and died there in 1634. But Noy, an opponent of the Crown, was bought outright and became Attorney-General, merely asking what his salary would be. Speaker Finch, whom Holles had held down in the chair, became a royal partisan and was to be Chief Justice. Others followed, and it became the fashion in the Westminster Courts to see how far the law could be wrenched in the King's favour. Charles probably lost more than he gained from his fair-weather friends, most of whom deserted him again in the day of need. Meanwhile they made his cause unpopular by parading their partiality and coupling many a sound legal judgment with provocative speeches about an illimitable Prerogative and the wickedness of resistance.

One grievance against the Crown they never surrendered. They remained jealous enemies of the Prerogative Courts. Star Chamber they dared not attack, nor the Archbishop's High Commission, to which came not only ecclesiastical cases but many matters of inheritance, marriage, and public morals. But they maintained the old war with the Council for the North, and they had many allies.

The Council for the North had fallen on evil days. Its cheap, swift decisions still attracted litigants, and it decided cases on a system distasteful to Westminster. Westminster and its judges on circuit retorted with writs of prohibition, calling cases out of the Council's jurisdiction; and they were winning in the contest.

Two things hampered the Council. It was not only a law court, it was also the instrument whereby the Crown kept the northern gentry active in their local duties, as did the Privy Council in the rest of England. It had to see that they levied rates upon themselves and administered them efficiently on roads and bridges, the militia drills, the relief or employment of the poor. It had to supervise the decisions of justices of the peace, stop unjust enclosures of common land, detect fraud, and prevent forms of profit-making that were damaging to the community. In pro-

portion as it was active, it was unpopular among the rich. In the West Riding, where clothiers were destroying their own trade by fraudulently stretching the cloth (France had begun to prohibit its import), the justices refused to court unpopularity by enforcing the law, and the Council had to take the odium on itself.

Secondly, internal corruption was at work, greatly increased since the Elizabethan tradition of officialdom gave way to Jacobean scandals. One President of the Council fixed a kind of tariff by which men could buy a seat at his board and recoup themselves with bribes. He had found on his land deposits of alum (needed by the clothiers), and handled the production in truly modern style. A monopoly was purchased and a company formed to exploit it with high prices; when it ceased to pay, the shareholders put the business into so-called Government hands and drew salaries, while the losses fell on public funds. Finally, the Council for the North came into the hands of the Savile family, country gentry with clothing interests, at feud with the Wentworths. The alum scandal continued, reinforced by corrupt bargains with the Papists in the matter of penal-law fines. The Saviles had obtained Buckingham's ear, and though Buckingham does not seem to have shared in the plunder, they did as they liked.

There was one person both willing and competent to set matters straight, and that was Lord Wentworth. He was soon to have a seat in the Privy Council, and the result was a series of orders making for good government and the protection of the poor.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile he was warmly welcomed at York as President of the Council for the North. In his inaugural speech he challenged the lawyers' writs of prohibition as a "bleeding evil" from which the Council was slowly dying. He appealed for a truce to local feuds in the name of decent government. He assured his hearers that the Crown was their best safeguard against

<sup>1</sup> See Gardiner, vii. 160.

local oppression. Perhaps some memory of his father's last words strengthened that side of his nature that was always "pityfull to the poor." "I do here offer myself," he said, "an instrument for good in any man's hand. He that useth me most hath most of my heart, even to the meanest man within the whole jurisdiction."

Wentworth might beg for a truce to old feuds, but the North was not likely to respond, and he was soon making new enemies on all sides. He had most of the qualities that attract enmity—a hot temper and a haughty manner, inflexible honesty, contempt for laziness, hatred for every backstairs way of making money. "Justice without respect for persons" has been called his motto. The work was tough, for the North was a curious mixture of the modern and the primitive. On the one hand the clothing interest of the West Riding was against him. On the other were turbulent noblemen like Lord Eure, who got into debt and refused his creditors satisfaction until Wentworth brought up artillery from Scarborough to enforce their claims. There was Sir John Bouchier, an old alum profiteer, who had to be imprisoned for breaking down the King's fences on land recently adjudged Royal Forest. Wentworth persuaded the King to release him after six months. In eight years, Bouchier was giving hostile evidence at Wentworth's trial; in sixteen he had put his signature to the death-warrant of King Charles.

Wentworth went on his way. He stopped a campaign of slander against himself, made successful sallies against the encroachments of the Westminster courts, supported the levy of ship-money, knighthood fines, and forest enlargement, bullied the gentry into doing their work. He accused them of "observing a superior command no farther than they liked themselves, and of questioning any profit of the Crown . . . which might help it to subsist of itself." If he made friends to balance his enemies they were not among the rich and powerful. We only know



that when his wife died, the whole city of York extended its sympathy and wore "a face of mourning." But Wentworth cared little for popularity or unpopularity. The next work to which the King appointed him was to earn him more enemies still.

Such were the men, some bad, some good, through whom Charles governed his kingdom for eleven unparliamentary years. Their virtues and vices must be his responsibility. No doubt they did many things without his knowledge, exceeded instructions, and, especially in the law courts, became *plus royaliste que la roi*. No doubt he often wished he could find better men to work for him. But there is no doubt of his general approval; he always resented the suggestion that subordinates, not the King, were responsible for Crown policy. Loyalty or obstinacy made him protect his servants, as he had protected Buckingham long after his predecessors would have thrown him to the dogs. It is the tragedy of his life that, when the crisis came, he had to sacrifice the noblest of all his servants, and the manner of that sacrifice did him more harm than good.

Dr. Johnson, sacramentally speaking the last of the Cavaliers, said that a Government should be judged by the provision it makes for the poor. From such a test Charles's Government emerges with great credit. The poor law established by Elizabeth seems to have worked tolerably well, especially in relieving the infirm and disabled. It received a new vitality in King Charles's reign from the energy of his Privy Council; it extended, with excellent effect, the provision for finding employment for the able-bodied. The whole system fell to pieces during the Civil Wars. Cromwell revived its efficiency for a time, but a harsher and more irresponsible spirit was already growing. The Puritan triumph coincided with the extinction of that mediæval and Catholic spirit that links poverty with saintliness and makes its relief a religious duty. By the time the Restoration came to continue the weakening of

central government, poverty was well on its way to becoming a crime.<sup>1</sup>

In order to ensure that the gentry should attend not only to poor relief but to all their duties in central government, Charles checked their growing habit of living in London houses and becoming useless figures in a useless "Society." Those who held no Court appointment were driven back to their estates and their work by heavy fines.

At the same time Charles maintained his predecessors' policy of forbidding jerry-building in London, and even the repair of old houses with cheap materials. A petition from his first Parliament for the relaxation of this rule is one of the few that he met with a direct negative. More interesting, in view of the future, was the incident of the Dutchman who erected a mechanical sawmill in 1634, and was told to take it down again, as it was creating unemployment among the sawyers. Two other measures link Charles's reign more directly with our own. He was the first to license a regular service of London cabs, though noise and congestion soon forced him to limit them. He founded the Post Office, by turning the royal system of dispatch riders into a public post and instituting regular mails to Scotland, Plymouth, Holyhead, and the Continent. When we grumble for our penny post we might remember that our ancestors in Charles's reign had to pay nearly a shilling for each hundred miles.

There is one instance in which Charles set his face against an ancient horror, apparently growing worse in Protestant countries, certainly intensified by King James's peculiar views. The persecution of witches was perhaps the most hideous feature of contemporary life, and James, bitten with superstitious terror in his Scottish youth, encouraged the practice in all his kingdoms. Most men believed in the reality of witchcraft and the duty of stamp-

<sup>1</sup> See E. M. Leonard, *Early History of English Poor Relief*, and M. James, *Social Problems during the Puritan Revolution*, pp. 15-20.

ing it out : <sup>1</sup> many women confessed, apparently under no pressure, to Satanic intercourse. But others, undoubtedly innocent, were abominably tortured into confession : others, protesting innocence, were convicted on evidence shamefully flimsy and patently prejudiced. Against one batch of seven poor wretches in Lancashire, a boy had been allowed to bear witness who afterwards confessed that he had done it to save himself from a scolding for being late in bringing the cows home. The women were denied counsel, and one complained that a high wind outside and the noise of many spectators prevented her even hearing the evidence against her. Before the Privy Council heard of the case, three of the victims had died in prison and one was dying. The remaining three were brought to London, admitted to an interview with the King, and provided with a pardon. They seem to have been kept in prison, perhaps to save them from lynching by the people. A year later the Bishop rescued two more from condemnation and death.

Charles made a bolder and more general stand against an institution peculiar to extreme Protestantism—the Puritan Sabbath. It was generally agreed that nobody should work on Sunday : the Puritans were trying to see that nobody should play. They pointed to the amount of drunkenness and ribaldry that Sunday entailed, they even got one judge to defy the King's orders, prohibit Sunday "wakes" or festive gatherings, and order clergymen to read his prohibition in church. The judge was severely reprimanded. Meanwhile Charles republished "The Declaration of Sports" which his father had written but practically retracted. It forbade any one to discourage people from dancing, archery, "leaping, vaulting, or any such harmless recreation." Charles pointed out that Puritan activities were justifying the Papists when they

<sup>1</sup> Any one who has read of the poisoning and child murder among the witches of Paris in Louis XIV's time will agree that there was something in the orthodox view.

called Protestantism a religion of gloom ; that whatever the rich might think, the poor had only their Sundays for recreation ; that nothing could so increase drunkenness on Sunday as the prohibition of sports. His opponents had to win a civil war before they could have their way. They are perhaps innocent of later follies, and that boxing of the compass on the Fourth Commandment which denied any pleasure on Sunday, but doubled the servants' work with vast family luncheons. But there is still a witness against the Puritans in the youths who kick their heels in mischievous idleness and tell each other smutty stories at the street corners and village greens of what was once Merrie England.

The ideas that Charles attacked had many sincere if narrow advocates. A few were glad to suffer for their faith. Whether it was wise to punish them is very doubtful : it is often represented as the worst mistake Charles made. Undoubtedly the whole business is often exaggerated.<sup>1</sup> Branding and mutilation were the ordinary instruments of local government. J.P.s used them constantly to punish the poor. Much of the opposition to Charles's policy arose from their use against the well-to-do and the educated. Even so the cases are far fewer than is generally implied. In fifteen years there were barely half a dozen.

The first was Dr. Gill, a schoolmaster at St. Paul's, who had said, with libellous detail, that Charles was fitter to be a Cheapside shopkeeper than a king. He lost his orders as a clergyman and his place at school. He was condemned to be fined and have his ears cut off, but these sentences were immediately cancelled, and the King signed a free pardon. Gill was followed by Dr. Leighton, whose book (printed in Holland to escape censorship) was held to suggest civil war, and certainly referred to bishops

<sup>1</sup> For a really unpardonable instance of misrepresentation, I recommend the reader to a certain incident in Mr. Drinkwater's play on Oliver Cromwell.

as "the trumpery of Antichrist" and to Queen Henrietta as "a daughter of Heth." He was sentenced to fine, imprisonment, branding, and the cropping of both ears. Again there seems to have been an intention to remit the corporal punishment, but Leighton defeated it by escaping from prison. He was recaptured and half the sentence executed.

Finally, there was William Prynne. He had been warned before for his controversial writings, and in 1634 he brought out a colossal tome called *Histriomastix*, a wholesale assault on the theatre. He was accused of libelling the Queen, then busy with preparations for a new play at Court. His sentence was the same as Leighton's; it was executed in full; it seems barbarously extreme. It is clear that the Court was not only striking at a libeller but at a whole system of thought—if it can be called thought—which represents not only acting as a mortal sin, but also dancing, keeping Christmas, lighting bonfires, and even "dressing up houses with green ivy."

The sentence did not, at the time, seem to be a mistake. Its brutality was not in question: Prynne had urged similar punishments for actors, with hanging for those who persevered in their wicked profession. There is no evidence of popular indignation, and Prynne's fellow-lawyers declared their approval of the sentence by inviting Charles and Henrietta to a play at the Inns of Court. The only protest was against the humiliation being inflicted on a man of position, because "neither his academical nor barrister's gown" could save him. Nevertheless, it is generally a mistake to provide opponents with a martyr. Prynne had some of the stuff from which martyrs are made: he was to persevere, to be arraigned again and suffer, amid great indignation, with two companions, before he ended his curious life as keeper of the Tower archives, antiquary, and friend of Charles II.

Meanwhile the King had three kingdoms to rule, and six or seven millions of men. If he punished a few Puritans,

the ghastly executions of Catholic priests were dying out, while most of Europe was still alive with persecution. For one reason or another, we were at peace, while the Continent was racked with the most terrible of all wars. The wealth of England was increasing steadily. Whatever Charles's motives, his unparliamentary government was resulting in attempts to distribute that wealth with some approach to fairness, certainly to demand a *quid pro quo* from the rich in the form of service to the community. There was opposition, and men jibbed at the yoke, some for evil motives, some on high principle. There was no sign of general disloyalty, still less of civil war. Three things must happen before that danger could threaten—in Ireland, in Scotland, and in Lambeth Palace.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THREE KINGDOMS

1633-35

GEOGRAPHY plays cruel jokes on mankind, and perhaps its cruellest was to place the English and Irish on adjacent islands. It may have been necessary for us to conquer Ireland; it has been easy to achieve a partial conquest; sometimes, with greater effort, we have made it complete. Before the resultant hatreds can die away, we are confronted with the insoluble problem of governing a people whose idea of government, whose sense of right and wrong, differs radically from our own. Assuming our own standards to be superior, we have generally attempted to enforce them. We have recently abandoned the attempt after seeing the situation go from farce to the deepest tragedy. The seventeenth century refused to make such a surrender, though its task was harder. Tudor conquest and repression had been unscrupulous and unspeakably savage, leaving terrible legacies of hatred. Psychological divergences were more pronounced, and the colour of contemporary politics made religious difference more mischievous. The conquerors, assuming that they represented a higher civilization, thought that they had nothing to learn from Ireland. The best of them could see no way to help her but by forcing her to become English. The worse were making this doubtful task an impossible one by demonstrating how greedy, how unscrupulous, and how surprisingly cruel an Englishman can be. The jest was at its grimmiest.

The official remedy for Ireland's woes was "plantation," the destruction of tribal ownership, the substitution

of private property on the English model, with a high proportion of English landowners. It was an unwise method for recommending a higher civilization. A learned Victorian once described English land law as "the most unmitigated nonsense ever put together by the perverted ingenuity of man." But perverted ingenuity enabled us to jockey Irishmen out of their land and replace them by honest, god-fearing Protestants. The process affected huge districts, reducing thousands to beggary or dependence. And England sent over too many Protestants who had neither honesty in them nor the fear of God. The black sheep of respectable families, the leaders of disreputable ones, became the landowners of Ireland.

For there was money to be made by the ingenious. Richard Boyle, a clever lawyer of shady reputation, had landed in Dublin with a hundred pounds and was now Earl of Cork, holding more land than any one in Ireland. He had even found profit in the Protestant Church. While the vaults of Dublin cathedral were wine and tobacco shops, and its Communion table a seat for servants and apprentices, while another church was a stable, another a tennis court (with the parson as marker), Lord Cork had bought up a large number of curacies, appointed curates at £25 a year, and kept £275 apiece for himself. He had put a relation into Lismore bishopric, and farmed its revenues, paying £100 and pocketing £5000. He drew £500 a year for repairing the cathedral, and the cathedral was ruinous.

The double process of robbing the Irish of their land and the English Church of its money was going on in a country barely recovered from the Elizabethan method of reconquest—systematic starvation of whole counties, and no quarter for those who surrendered. Some would have pushed the business to its logical conclusion, the extinction of the Irish race. King James had tried to reintroduce Christianity into the hardened hearts of the settlers, and perhaps he did a little good. But his governors could



hardly expect to rule with gentleness and scrupulous legality. Of Lord Deputy Falkland, left as a legacy to Charles, there were ugly stories. Charles ordered an inquiry into his method of "planting" Wicklow; he was told that the lawyers had indicted a Wicklow magnate for conspiracy; that some of them hoped for a share of his land; that they had extracted their evidence from condemned felons by a promise of pardon, and from one unwilling Irishman by the simple expedient of putting him on a red-hot grid. Falkland, perhaps innocent himself, protested against inquiry and was removed. There was delay in finding a successor. One peer refused the work; he had been in Ireland before. Then Charles sent Wentworth.

Wentworth had just married again, and he liked his work at York, but he accepted the post. He made conditions—a free hand, no backstairs work at Whitehall, no places or pickings for courtiers. He brought two Yorkshiremen with him, one, Wandesford, to be the only Englishman for whose death the Irish raised a keening. He found the resident officials "a company of men the most intent on their own ends that ever I met with." The Government was Protestant, and it was strangling the Protestant Church with corruption. It had no right in Ireland but the right of conquest, and it was letting its army go to rack and ruin. Its revenue depended largely on trade, and trade was at the mercy of local pirates. Wentworth crossed the Irish Sea in safety, but the pirates got £2500 worth of his baggage. Lord Cork met him on the quay, all smiles and courtesy. Wentworth went up to Dublin Castle, reviewed the situation, and rolled up his sleeves.

The castle was mildewed and ruinous. The kitchen poured smoke into his study. Here he sat and watched an old lean horse outside the window, cropping the meagre grass while its legs sank slowly into bog; from time to time it struggled free and tried a new place. Wentworth

He was detected in considerable peculations. At the Council board he was an intolerable bore. Luckily he could not stay in the same room as a cat, and Wentworth used to get rid of him by bringing cats to Council. At last Wentworth could stand him no more. Some injudicious words of Mountnorris, uttered months ago, were construed into a charge of mutiny—for Mountnorris held a military commission. He was found guilty, and the regulations allowed no penalty but death. Wentworth immediately assured him there was no intention of executing the sentence. Indeed, this strangely contradictory despot ruled Ireland for seven years with a minimum of bloodshed. Mountnorris was released after a short imprisonment. But the sentence had implied dismissal from office, and Wentworth was hampered by him no more.

Meanwhile debts were being paid off, and the annual deficit became a surplus. Piracy was put down, trade flourished, the Ulster flax-industry was founded. The army became an army again, Wentworth's own troop being a model to the rest. The men were paid and provisioned, instead of "fetching in every morsel of bread upon their swords'-point," at the expense of peaceful citizens. The Church began to revive, Wentworth rating bishops for allowing the bloodsuckers to plunder them, and trying to make the parsons learn Irish so that they could talk intelligently to the Papists they were supposed to convert.

While Wentworth did all that energy and honesty could achieve, the real roots of the trouble lay untouched, and in places they struck deeper. A succession of Wentworths might conceivably have made Ireland English and Protestant and prosperous. One can only guess how much that is of benefit to humanity might have perished in the process. But there was only one Wentworth; he had only seven years in Ireland, and he thought of her mainly as a pawn in the great game that involved three kingdoms. Wentworth was an Englishman; his purpose, though

honest, was an English one, and nothing that came from seventeenth-century England could cure the deeper evils of Ireland.

His methods varied from the unscrupulously drastic to the tyrannously unjust. In his own words, he found "a Crown, a Church, and a people spoiled. I could not imagine to redeem them from under the pressure with gracious smiles and gentle looks." The plea is good, but not quite good enough. He bullied and manipulated the Irish Parliament, and punished juries for verdicts given against the Crown. He broke one definite promise given by King Charles, the one promise that might have healed the breaking hearts of Irishmen—that titles to land should be no more disturbed. They had granted taxes on the understanding that this, among other "King's graces," should become law: it was the one reform that Wentworth stopped. His excuse was that existing titles based on robbery must be revoked in the name of justice. But he used the opening to plan a new plantation in Connaught. Its objects were economic development, spread of Protestantism, garrison against invasion. The same motives had been alleged to justify the worst rapacities of his predecessors' time. The new plantation was never carried out, but its planning was a direct breach of the royal pledge. Wentworth and Charles must share the guilt.

Charles has often been blamed for a rather guarded and unfriendly appreciation of Wentworth's work. Certainly he still held back the Earldom for which Wentworth petitioned, and he did one worse thing (though he promised never to repeat it) in allowing a large sum of Irish money to go into the pocket of a courtier. Two things must be remembered. Wentworth, as events were to prove, was one of the most dangerous of all servants, and Charles may well have been wise to suppress in public any enthusiasm he may have felt for his work. Secondly, Charles lived for years under a constant bombardment of grievances against Wentworth's high-handed honesty, of

Weston's intrigues to thwart him, of Henrietta's ill-concealed dislike and disapproval of his person and ideas. When Wentworth came home for his one holiday, knowing courtiers doubted what his reception would be. He read a long report to an impassive King. As he proceeded, Charles grew more encouraging and ended with unqualified approval. For the next few days, Wentworth was the lion of the Court.

Two friends he had always had, and his correspondence with them, across the Irish Sea, was his one link with the more refined life to which he had been accustomed. One was Lucy Carlisle, whose beauty and brains gave her great influence. But a cold nature and disloyalty in her friendships made her an inspiration rather than a source of comfort.

His other friend, whose influence with the King may have done much to balance that of Weston and Henrietta, was Bishop Laud. His correspondence with Wentworth was naturally full of congratulation on the rescue of the Irish Church. But the bond between the two went deeper. They had the same mind in their different work. Both took "Thorough" for their motto, both detested lethargy, inefficiency, and self-seeking. They summed up their hatreds in the nickname "Lady Mora," my Lady Delay, with which they christened Weston. Weston died, but in other forms his spirit was still active. They thought it mere weakness in the King that allowed Lady Mora to clog his administration. They were perhaps right, though they may have underestimated the task of expelling her. They may also have underestimated that grain of worldly wisdom in Weston's methods and the King's tolerance. Without Lady Mora as passenger, Laud and Wentworth might have made the chariot of State roll with half the friction and twice the impetus. Aiming at the stars, they might have landed their master even sooner in the ditch.

The two were as different in origin as in outward aspect. Wentworth's face, dark, proud, and dynamic, is unmis-

takably an aristocrat's; Vandyke gives all his sitters the same lovely hands, but with Wentworth's he may have been accurate, for even Henrietta commented on their beauty. There was nothing aristocratic about his friend. Twenty years before Wentworth's birth, a respectable clothier's widow in Reading married a second respectable clothier, and their only child was William Laud. He was sixty before Vandyke painted him, and even Vandyke cannot hide the resemblance to a provincial schoolmaster with a faint air of surprise at the wickedness of the world. He was more learned than his friend, as befitted his calling; a professorship he founded at Oxford still testifies to his interest in Arabic. He was of tiny stature, inclined to fuss, inclined to be irritable. He was one of the few great Churchmen who never commanded the affection or allegiance of women. He was something of a saint, while Wentworth had some very human failings. He was utterly ignorant of the courtier's art. He never forgave himself a sin of his youth, when he presided at the marriage of a divorced woman to please a patron. He cared less than Wentworth for ease or money, and shared his hatred for slackness and self-seeking, his love of order and discipline. Both looked to the Crown as the safeguard against all evils: neither wished it to be above the law or act with arbitrary tyranny, but, while Wentworth always believed that Parliament could be led or driven into the service of good government, Laud referred to it as "that noise." In a sense, the Crown betrayed them, because, though they did not realize it, only despotism could have made their programme possible, and Charles refused to be a despot. Neither could see any divergence between the interests of the Crown and the interests of the English people, and both died for their narrow but not ignoble faith. Wentworth's work perished with him, and for two centuries England was a paradise for all he hated. Much of Laud's remains to this day.

The Roman Catholics maintain that a country which

breaks from Rome has taken the first step on a road that ends with the rejection of Christianity. One cannot argue with people who think in centuries and particularly in future centuries. But one can recognize the peculiar perils of Protestantism: they were underrated by Laud's contemporaries, who felt that political oppression of Papists and envenomed denunciations of Rome would preserve them from reconquest, and were unconscious of the opposite danger—the possibility that the great message of Christianity might be so confused with dialectic, so watered down to suit individual tastes, as to be powerless in a later generation. Laud thought in a more disciplined, perhaps a narrower way; we are in violent reaction to his ideas to-day, and can see little except the failure of their exponents to adjust themselves to the pressure of modern problems; but they are worth examination in the light of different conditions.

It is sometimes forgotten how far back his roots stretched. His father could probably remember Reading as a mere adjunct to a great monastery. He himself lived thirty years under Elizabeth. He went up to an Oxford resounding with barren disputes between cliques of self-satisfied Calvinists. While Sublapsarian argued with Superlapsarian and agreed only in denouncing the Scarlet Woman of Rome, the bishopric of Oxford was unfilled, and my Lord Essex pocketed its revenues. The English Church had reformed doctrine; but while Rome reformed these incidental abuses that had brought the Reformation to a head, England was full of ruinous churches, drunken and loose-living parsons; the poor could not understand theological controversy, and their souls were being lost by sheer slackness and corruption. It was to be the cardinal error of Laud's life that he always identified slackness and corruption with all forms of religious dispute and all revolt from orthodox Anglican doctrine. He never understood the later Puritans: he knew there was much that was merely lazy and stupid in their dislike for ceremony; he

did not realize that there also was burning conviction. When he became commander of the Church Militant, he could not tolerate arguing in the ranks: all were agreed on the fundamentals, and dispute about minor matters (whose decision was beyond the limits of the human mind) bred dissension and even mutiny in the face of the enemy. He never pretended to have an exclusive message from God, and hated the Pope for making such a claim. He argued against the persecution of opinion and the forcing of any man's conscience. He insisted only on an outward uniformity of conduct and ceremony (again as in a military body). He knew from personal experience that religion means not only religious ceremony, almsgiving, and the service of the poor, but also the striving for truths behind and beyond the Prayer Book, the plumbing of depths no words can express, the wrestling with God's angels. But these things he kept to himself and could fit into a ceremonial framework. He was culpably unsympathetic towards men who had to share them with others, who were hindered by outward forms from pushing out into the depths, who were slowly suffocating in the orderly atmosphere he created.

He had been hated at Oxford. Even his attack on Rome was an unfashionable one. He had made the interesting discovery that Christendom was not divided between Rome and the Protestant rebels, but contained Greek and Coptic Churches,<sup>1</sup> as old as Rome, as tied to ceremony and yet strongly anti-Papal. He wanted to fight the Pope with his own weapons, and was dubbed a Papist for his trouble.

He was fifty before any one noticed him. Then James and Buckingham picked him out and employed him against the Popish controversialists who had converted Buckingham's mother. His arguments were sober, charitable, but, to a Protestant, unanswerable. They made him Bishop of St. David's; Charles translated him to London

<sup>1</sup> He later established a Greek undergraduate at Balliol—who taught Evelyn to drink coffee, for the first time in England.

and made him Chancellor of Oxford. He converted the University from extreme Calvinism, and made it a Royalist stronghold. He became the motive force of a campaign to make the clergy more conscientious, more energetic, better educated. Archbishop Abbot was Calvinistic and also a slack organizer, but he knew that nine-tenths of Laud's programme was overdue. One did not need to be a High Churchman to dislike hearing that one church was used for cock-fighting, and in another a dog had run off with the bread from the Communion. Records show that at this time Laud's attack was almost all directed against disorders and slackness, rather than Puritanism.<sup>1</sup> Laud's own cathedral of St. Paul's was ruinous ; booths and houses clung to it like parasites ; porters used the nave as a short cut, and the whole building was a promenade for the idle, a noisy stand for City bargainers, a haunt of pickpockets. Laud had it stripped and repaired. Inigo Jones designed the necessary additions : very odd his classic columns must have looked supporting the ancient Gothic. Londoners began to treat their cathedral with respect, to use their increasing wealth on the restoration and beautifying of the City churches. Within a dozen years St. Paul's was to stand neglected again while the City killed Laud and waged war upon his master. Then Cromwell offered it to the Jews as a business centre. Eight years after his death it was in ashes, and Wren replaced it with a glory beyond Inigo's dreams.

Old St. Paul's was still in the repairer's hands when Charles received an invitation from the Scottish nobles to come and be crowned in Edinburgh. Laud went with him ; together they took a look at the Scottish Kirk ; and they did not like what they saw.

There was little lack of zeal or efficiency, but there was a lack of uniformity. The services, too, had none of the beauty and dignity which Charles thought necessary to religion. The kirks were bare and ugly, wearing with

<sup>1</sup> See Gardiner, x. p. 224.



pride the wounds inflicted by the Reformers on their fabric: not Reformation, said Laud, but deformation.

The organization of the Kirk was a compromise of sixty years' standing. The nobles had prevented John Knox from abolishing bishops, but had forced them to hand over a large proportion of the episcopal revenues, destroying their self-respect and their influence with the people. Meanwhile the bishops' power was limited by the system of grouping several parishes under a "presbytery," or committee of elected elders, controlling the appointment of ministers and the morals of their flock. This discipline was backed by the General Assembly of the Kirk, manned by nobles and laymen as well as clergy, and exercising a Papal power of excommunication. Aristocratic rapacity had extended beyond monastic and episcopal lands and seized on the parish tithes. The nobles had resisted Royal control more successfully than in most European countries; they still enjoyed a local power of life and death; now they had secured a right to make their tenants leave crops ungarnered to the weather until the landlord chose to collect his tithe. King James had tried to strengthen the bishops' position and appealed to the nobles to surrender their ancient rights. "He might as well," says Gardiner, "have lectured a gang of smugglers on the propriety of respecting the interests of the Revenue." James also annoyed the more Protestant instincts of the nation by his "Articles of Perth," of which the most obnoxious was the rule that men must kneel to receive Communion. For beneath and even among the aristocrats there was a sincere and extreme Calvinism which every man must respect and no government could outrage without great danger.

Charles began his reign with a bold stroke. The power of the nobles was reduced in the Edinburgh Parliament: some of their spoil was resumed to the Crown and devoted to ecclesiastical purposes: tithe was restored to the Kirk. Their black rage was softened by a certain amount of

compensation. The "Articles of Perth" were slightly modified. Some Scots at least could have Communion served to them while they sat: their Kirk was financially independent: their farms were freed from a wasting burden.

However angry at the time, the Scottish nobles gave Charles a royal hospitality when he came to be crowned ten years later. It is even said that the debts they contracted accounted for some of the later troubles. The elaboration of the coronation service, the "Popish" embroidery of the altar cloth caused a good deal of gossip. But Charles received a rousing welcome from his countrymen when he rode round the Northern Kingdom. Whether the little old man with the black cloak dogged him from Dunfermline Palace we do not know. He certainly had a narrow escape from drowning in the Forth at Burntisland, and busybodies rushed round to find out what witches had raised the storm.

It is interesting to speculate what reputation he might have left, had death found him at Burntisland. He had certainly failed to achieve popularity in England, and was neither hated nor loved. He had failed abroad, partly through his own fault, partly through Parliament's shabby treatment. But he had done much for Scotland and chosen the best available governor for Ireland; he had encouraged much needed reforms in the English Church, and done something to keep the rich to their duties to the community. The tone of public life had risen from a very low depth during his ten years. A fine taste had encouraged every form of beauty and enlightenment. The three kingdoms were finding a new prosperity.

It was not to be. Charles had before him a little more happiness, many years of anxiety and suffering. He must live to see the ruin of all he loved, the killing of his servants, the exile of his wife and children. He must become a legend, loathed and execrated by many, but inspiring in others a tremendous, a not quite explicable devotion.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### OMINOUS

1635-38

CHARLES returned from Scotland in a hurry. He was only just in time to welcome a new arrival into the world. the little prince who would one day be James II. At the same time an old man, honest, lethargic, a little muddled, was passing away in Lambeth Palace. When Laud appeared at Court, still ignorant of Abbot's death, Charles greeted him with a surprise. "My Lord's Grace of Canterbury," he said, "you are very welcome."

Some idiot in the Queen's train offered Laud a Cardinal's hat as an inducement to bring England Romewards. The Pope had sent an envoy to treat for reunion, and Mr. Secretary Windebank was given the work of conducting the hopeless negotiations. When the offer to Laud was repeated, a few weeks later, Laud remarked drily that Rome must first be other than it was, and went on with the campaign he was now free to conduct. Its first aim was still order and efficiency, and if it had stopped there all might yet have been well. But it went on to offend powerful interests, not altogether unjustly: it alienated some very admirable souls of whose allegiance any Church might be proud; it associated itself with a certain form of government, shared in and increased its unpopularity, and brought Church and Crown crashing down together.

Laud was quite fearless. While he bullied parsons for slackness and insubordination, he insisted on the rich paying heavy fines for their adulteries and high-born ladies doing public penance in a white sheet. Meanwhile he was trying to free the Church from lay control.

All but the highest nobles were forbidden to keep private chaplains in their houses, and Laud attacked the system whereby rich individuals or private corporations supported "lecturers" and preachers in competition with the parish priest. Some lecturers held meetings of their own, some stayed in the vestry while parson read the service and then emerged to do the showier work in the pulpit. And their discourses were apt to be very Puritanical in tone; and if they did not speak of politics, every one knew that some at least had very definite views.

Here indeed was the whole crux of the matter. Laud's Church was an "established" one: its head was the King: it could not avoid encouraging his friends and reviling his enemies. Even international Rome has frequently found its servants tying themselves to a political party. Protestants are in worse case, Luther throwing all his influence into the scale of German princes and abusing rebels with an un-Christian ardour, Calvin tinged with the political ideas of Geneva, a republic menaced by kingly and ducal neighbours. The English monarchy had led the revolt from Rome and absorbed the Pope's authority; it was inconceivable that the Church should not be used for monarchical ends. We have seen the end of one such alliance in our own day: the rulers of Russia, using their Church to support a tottering government, have fallen and destroyed all Christianity in their fall.

Laud could see no stay but the Crown for helping the Church to remain independent of aristocratic or popular control, and transmit to posterity a tradition undiluted by passing fashions. It must not, as have some disestablished churches, change its doctrine and discipline to suit the tastes of those who pay for its upkeep and sacrifice expert opinion to the amateur, centuries to a single generation. There had been too much of this in the recent past. "I could have been as gracious with the people as any," said Laud, "even the worst of my predecessors, but I ever held it the lowest depths of baseness to frame religion to

serve turns." But Laud's master was a struggling king, in need of support. Laud did not realise that Royalism was a passing phrase, for every one likes to think his own views are part of the changeless stuff of the Universe; but his enemies accused him of framing religion to serve the King's turn, and the charge is absolutely unanswerable.

The bias showed itself first in the control of appointments. Laud had long ago made a kind of Crockford's Directory of the Clergy, and marked each name P. or O., Puritan or Orthodox. The P.'s were seldom dismissed, though frequently rated. It was rather that men of a certain cast of mind knew that there was no welcome for them and certainly no promotion in the English Church. The prohibition against controversy and preaching on "curious points of doctrine" was relaxed, and relaxed in disfavour of Puritanism, in favour of the Royalist. Some care was taken to prevent the preaching of submission to arbitrary despotism, but Mainwaring, who had told a congregation to subscribe to the Forced Loan, had now become a bishop. Meanwhile the Puritan prayer-meetings were prohibited in private houses, in fields, and woods. Baxter, later to be chaplain to a Roundhead regiment, tells us how such proceedings of Laud's turned him from his previous loyalty to Church and Prayer Book. He knew many excellent Puritans, and thought that "those who silenced and troubled such men could not be genuine followers of the Lord of Love." The same Church which broke up their prayer-meetings, censored their books, and rewarded their opponents in the pulpit. Many were emigrating to America (Laud thought of prohibiting them, but cancelled the order), and there were among them enough men to set up a state based on principles which were perhaps farther from those of the Lord of Love than ever Laud's had been. The intolerance on both sides makes one wonder whether the problem was not for the time insoluble. It is interesting to find that the first step to a solution was already being taken, and on American soil.

The little colony of Maryland, sent out by Charles, probably as a refuge for the Papists he was forced to oppress at home, decided to adopt what a contemporary Parliamentarian called "that grand Chimæra, Liberty of Conscience." Their Parliament made it law, all Christians become equal, and it proved no Chimæra.

At home Laud's policy provoked considerable resistance. Congregations fought against the removal of the Communion Table to the east end and its railing-in. Individuals broke stained-glass windows. Brave Prynne was still in prison, but still writing. He contrived to get a book printed without licence, attacking the Declaration of Sports, bishops and their political power. He was pilloried again, and lost what was left of his ears; lawyer Finch savagely suggested that he should also be branded on the cheeks. Beside him stood two companions, both condemned to ear-cropping—a clergyman called Burton for preaching two fierce sermons against ceremonies, and Bastwick, a doctor, who had published a scurrilous attack on bishops and "every limb of Antichrist." The London crowd had, this time, nothing but cheers and encouragement for their bravery, and Prynne met many demonstrations of sympathy on the long journey that took him to rigorous imprisonment in Lancaster gaol. Laud refused to sit among their judges, "because the business hath some reflection on myself." But he spoke at the trial, refuting the prisoners out of their own Calvinist authorities. Some men said that Laud was using an official position to wreak a private spite. It was an unjust charge, but it was partly Laud's fault that it could be made—and believed.

No one can doubt that the bishops were growing seriously unpopular with large classes, especially in London. If one had to point to any single reason for the downfall of King Charles, it would be to the policy which concentrated all grievances into one and presented a single target to shafts whose dispersion might have made them comparatively harmless. The united front may be an admirable

thing, but it can be very perilous, when retreat at one point endangers all the line, and the least compromise anywhere is a blow to the prestige of the whole. Charles had never disguised his government's sympathy with Laud's religious ideas; he was now beginning to make increasing use of bishops in political offices.

Scottish bishops became ministers of state. Their promotion angered the nobles, their hold on men's respect was small. Charles only knew that they had fewer axes to grind, owed their position to himself, shared his general view of life. Meanwhile he advanced Laud, already powerful on the Council. When a colonial committee was formed, Laud was one of its members; when Weston died, the Treasury was put into commission, and Laud was among the commissioners, Bishop Juxon another.

Laud's work at the Treasury was always honest and often wise. He even took the popular side in the great Soap Question, which Weston left as a legacy. Privileges had been granted to a new company, almost amounting to a monopoly; the Government was to be paid handsomely from the profits; Weston, it was discovered too late, had also made a bargain for the benefit of his private pocket. The old soapmakers raised a rumpus, all the more easily because some of their rivals were Papists. Papists had contrived Gunpowder Plot, so Popish soap would burn and blister the hands. A solemn court of inquiry met, containing the Lord Mayor, the Lieutenant of the Tower, and sundry other bigwigs, and they solemnly sat and watched two washerwomen attack two bundles of dirty clothes. To London's rage and Laud's annoyance, the verdict was for the new soap. Two years later its manufacturers, unable to make headway against public opinion, were nearly bankrupt. The Treasury was out of commission, and in Juxon's hands, and the soap privileges were transferred. The rare alliance of London with lawn sleeves had triumphed.

Meanwhile more serious resistance was growing. Soon

after Prynne's punishment, John Lilburne was whipped through the streets for denying the jurisdiction of Star Chamber. The Ship-Money Writ of 1636 provoked a more general quarrel. Charles asked the opinion of the judges, and ten of the twelve replied that he was within his rights to levy it. The judgment was felt to reflect merely their dependence on the King. Lord Saye decided to defy it, and persuaded a friend in a neighbouring county to do the same. For some unexplained reason, the second was made the test case, and the name of John Hampden immortalized. And thus a lawsuit about a matter of 31s. 6d. (seven guineas, as we should call it) became the battle-ground for two theories of government, two contrasted philosophies of human life.

Probably at Lord Bedford's suggestion Hampden had chosen as his advocates Robert Holbourne and Oliver St. John. The latter was the more powerful. He waived the plea that precedent only warranted the collection of ship-money in coastwise counties. He allowed that the King alone could decide when England was in danger for need of a fleet. But he argued that in such an emergency the King must call Parliament before levying ship-money, for Parliament was the only safeguard of the rights of property. This argument, sound politics perhaps, seems to us an extraordinary plea in a law court. But every one knew that this was no ordinary lawsuit.

The Crown lawyers proved that precedents sanctioned the levy of ship-money without Parliament's consent, their opponents that it was only an occasional, not a regular tax. They argued that the King was claiming a tiny sum in order to safeguard the nation's wealth; Hampden's lawyers showed that such a principle sanctioned all illegal taxation. The latter indeed made it look as if ship-money was not a mere expedient for increasing the navy, but a prelude to despotism based on arbitrary taxation of every kind. They have imposed their view on the majority of historians. Finally, Holbourne outbid St. John with the



extreme claim that Parliament, not the King, was the judge of national danger. The Attorney-General countered by declaring that all questioning of the King's authority was in itself a national danger. They were outside the region of private law: the custom of centuries, the sharing of sovereignty between Crown and Parliament, had broken down: where sovereignty was to lie in the future was a question to be decided not by the flapping of legal gowns, but by the brandishing of sword and pike.

The judges gave their decision, two by two, over a period of months. Of twelve, two were for Hampden on technical grounds, three on grounds of principle. Seven were for the King. Finch came last, and did a deal of harm; he boldly declared that even an Act of Parliament limiting the Prerogative was null and void.

So barren and dangerous a victory could hardly strengthen the Crown; it certainly helped to bring his enemies together. Their leaders had not lost touch with each other since the doors of St. Stephen's Chapel were locked behind their retreating backs.

Pym had taken no part in the rowdy scenes with which Eliot's friends brought Parliament to its close. Within a year he had found new employment in the City, as secretary to a company whose objects were the development of some most unpromising islands near the coast of Honduras. "The Company for the Plantation of Providence, Henrietta, and the Adjacent Islands" was founded in 1630. It lasted some ten years, and numbered among its directors the Earls of Essex, Warwick, and his brother, Holland; Lords Saye, Brooke, and Mandeville (later Manchester); Sir William Waller, Mr. Oliver St. John, and probably John Hampden. It only needs St. John's cousin Cromwell to make the complete staff of a Roundhead army.

The company was not a success. Providence had been nothing but a *dépôt* for smugglers and buccaneers, and to that it continually reverted, in spite of its directors' attempts to turn it into a settlement of godly and discreet

Puritans. The colonists were ordered to send home a half-share of agricultural profits, but the crops were all failures. They were meanwhile warned against drunkenness and bad language, told to burn their cards and dice, and restrict themselves to "chess and shooting": one wonders what language the islanders used when such instructions arrived. Godly chaplains were sent out, and proved less godly than the directors hoped: one taught his flock to sing catches, and this, it was whispered (though the horrible rumour was denied), on the Sabbath day. An attempt was made to revive agriculture by importing negro slaves: the traffic in them, soon to be a vast business, was generally defended on the ground that it helped to convert the heathen; but a Providence settler who questioned the right to possess slaves still in a state of "strangeness to Christianity" was told that his objection was "groundless." But nothing could make the colony prosper. The shareholders, in truly modern style, assured each other that all that was needed was more capital. They produced it, sunk it in the business and lost the lot—Brooke as much as £20,000, Pym nearly £16,000. The whole venture ended in the island reverting to buccaneering and a Spanish expedition coming to clear away the nuisance. Don Juan Diaz Pimienta had a sharp fight of it, but the English surrendered, 400 being shipped back to Europe while 350 negroes remained in Spanish hands.

Officially the directors met week after week at Lord Brooke's house in the City: the same men, if local legends are true, foregathered at Saye's castle of Broughton, and at Fawsley in Northampton, the home of Hampden's cousin Knightley. It is scarcely conceivable that even at Brooke House they talked only of business (though business included the friction with Laud at the colonial board over the appointment of chaplains). It is more likely that they also planned their campaign for English liberty. One is tempted (though it is grossly unfair) to quote Dr. Johnson again. "Why is it," said that pre-

judiced old gentleman, "that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty from the owners of slaves in America?"

It is unfair for more than one reason, partly because the first protest against slavery (before the Quakers', before Johnson's toast, "Success to the next negro rising in the West Indies") came from the Puritan Baxter. But it is perhaps permissible to draw attention to facts which show that Charles's opponents were not merely high-souled patriots but also ordinary men of business and (as we shall see) party politicians with every trick of the trade at command. These facts have been suppressed in the popular histories, while space is given to every sordid intrigue that went on at the King's court. There may be some value in retelling the story without such suppression and without more praise of what has been overpraised already. It may help us to realize that we are dealing with men of flesh and blood, and not with "historical figures." Charles's opponents were not particularly bad men. Their attitude to Roman Catholicism is the hardest thing for us to understand, and here it was Charles that was above his contemporaries, not his enemies beneath them. Probably few of them worked consciously for an extension of their economic power over the poor, or saw that such would be the result of their triumph. Few were religious hypocrites: Hampden's famous saying, "If it were not for this reiterated cry about religion, they could never be certain of keeping the people on their side," does not necessarily imply hypocrisy. The best of them must have regretted an alliance with the enemies of culture and refinement; Prynne and Milton are odd bedfellows.

Their common ground was the demand for a new Parliament and the concession of whatever demands it might make. It is doubtful if any one foresaw how extreme and even contradictory those demands might be. Only Charles was sure that each concession would make way for a new demand, until the Crown he had been born to guard was reduced to impotence: it is not easy to

prove him wrong. His financial expedients, at which the opposition expressed such indignation, were aimed at making him independent of Parliament, until an unusual crisis demanded unusual expenditure. There was a chance that, before it arose, the benefits of Royal administration and the pressure of the Church would convert England to the King's point of view and weaken even the opposition in the House of Commons. The crisis came too soon; it was about to arise in Scotland; and it provided the opposition with a magnificent opportunity.

For a long time there had been talk of a new Prayer Book for Scotland. Charles spent years over its composition, months over the form of its printing. Laud gave his advice, the reluctant Scottish bishops were asked to revise it. Meanwhile Scotland decided how to resist its introduction. The best way was naturally to represent it as "Popish." When it appeared, there was little to justify such an accusation, and some men were even driven to point at the ornamental capitals which Charles had inserted in the text, as reminiscent of a monkish missal. And it was hard to meet Charles's plea for uniformity as an answer to the Papists' jeer at a Church which did not know its own mind. But it was easy to raise Presbyterian feeling against a book compiled by bishops, and national feeling against one concocted in London. Charles's real and unpardonable mistake was to unite against himself the spirit of Wallace and John Knox.

In the summer of 1637 some one tried to read the new service in St. Giles' Cathedral, and there was a riot. It is sad that accuracy compels one to reject the story of Jenny Geddes hurling her stool at the bishop and crying, "Will you read Mass in my lug?" If a stool was thrown, it was probably by a shopkeeper's widow called Mrs. Mean. It was even suspected that some of her fellow-gossips were 'prentices disguised in skirts. They were put outside, and the service proceeded to the tune of splintering windows.

It is not likely that Charles had any conception of the greatness of his danger, but as news came from Scotland that riot was fast becoming revolution, men noticed that he began to wear a tired and harassed look, to hunt less often, to forsake his tennis. At Court, the Fool Archie blamed Laud for the trouble; he had always disliked and ridiculed the little Archbishop. "Who's the fool now?" he asked Laud, when news came in from Edinburgh; and off he went to get drunk in a tavern and call Laud a monk and a traitor. Arraigned for his words before the Council, Archie pleaded "the privilege of his cloth." But he lost his place and would have been whipped but for Laud's humane intervention. He retired to his native Westmoreland, begot a bastard, grew respectable, married, and died rich, twenty-five years after his master.

His successor was called Muckle John, and his task must have been a hard one, in a Court overshadowed by coming doom. Things were not improved by the arrival of an unwelcome visitor—Henrietta's mother, Marie de Medicis. Richelieu, who had risen by her favour, had long found her impossible and expelled her from France. Now she petitioned for an invitation to London, and, when Charles refused, came without it. "*Adieu, ma liberté,*" sighed Henrietta, but Charles could hardly show his mother-in-law the door. They welcomed her royally, and she settled down at St. James's, to scold and give bad advice, to intrigue against Richelieu, to intrigue against Parliament, to intrigue, Italian fashion, merely for the sake of intriguing.

Meanwhile the King's opponents were rousing themselves on every side. The Scots were writing to England and sending abroad for aid. Richelieu's agent was eager to foment the trouble; Richelieu said it needed no fomenting. Within two years of the Edinburgh riots, Scotland was at war with herself and with England. Within four, Ireland was in rebellion, the Long Parliament sat in London, and the King's servants were in prison or exile or the grave. The hunt was up.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### FIRST BLOOD

1638-40

A TRULY despotic government has one great advantage over its opponents; it can strike quickly, before they collect their forces, or even their thoughts. Charles had no such advantage. His position was based solely on the loyalty and duty of his subjects; he had no army, not even a proper guard for his palace; his police system had not changed since Shakespeare created Dogberry. He had a few firm friends, a few undoubted opponents. But now that the crisis of his life approached and the Scottish trouble precipitated all trouble, he had no means of distinguishing friend from foe, the loyal from the time-servers and traitors. The secrets of his Privy Council were sold, his palace was honeycombed with spies: it is even said that he had to take precautions against Scottish servants who ransacked his pockets in the night. His own agents were less successful, though his enemies found at least one secret paper had disappeared, to turn up in the Government's possession. Meanwhile treachery and rebellion clothed themselves in the phrases of fulsome and deferential loyalty. The air grew thick with lies—lies nicely calculated to estrange King and Parliament and People. Some of them are still current, though the most potent of all has not borne scrutiny. It is not possible to believe, as many honest men were induced to believe, that Charles contemplated the weakening of Protestantism and the introduction of Popery. Yet, but for that slander, it is doubtful if Charles could have been defeated.

As soon as it became clear that the Scottish riots were

a serious matter, Charles sent the Marquis of Hamilton north to gain time and, if necessary, to make concessions. Hamilton was a bad choice, not very wise, not very loyal to his master. And time was just what the Scottish opposition needed. They set up a provisional government, quaintly called "the Tables," representing nobles, gentlemen, clergy, and townsmen. One of their spokesmen was a minister named Alexander Henderson, who had already sent a very reasonable protest to Charles; he did not assert that the Prayer Book was indisputably Popish, and rightly emphasized the grievance that it had not had the sanction of Scottish Parliament or Kirk Assembly. The emphasis was soon to be shifted, for home consumption; Henderson presided over the signing of the Covenant. A document fifty years old, in which King James and his nobles had pledged themselves to resist the then real menace of Popery, was disinterred from the archives: a few paragraphs were added in which professions of loyalty to Charles were mixed with the assertion that religious "innovations" (done by his order) . . . "do sensibly tend to the re-establishing of the Popish religion and tyranny." Henderson stood in Greyfriars' Churchyard, as he stands to-day in the Victorian steel-engravings that adorn the walls of a thousand God-fearing Scottish homes, and watched noble and townsman and peasant sign the ingeniously constructed document upon a tombstone. There were similar scenes all over the Lowlands. Practically all the aristocracy signed, even Montrose, the bold hunter, the cunning swordsman, the scholar, and the poet, who would one day be a thorn in Covenanters' sides. Only Montrose's cousin, Napier of Merchiston, was far-sighted enough to refuse; he was an honest man and a Royalist, although his father invented logarithms. Other recusants were bullied and threatened in the streets as Papist dogs; recalcitrant ministers lost their livings. Charles had never attempted the hopeless task of forbidding controversial preaching in Scotland;

now the pulpit thundered against him. One Glasgow preacher declared that he "was sent to them with a commission from Christ to bid them subscribe," and the appropriate name of this particular blasphemer was Mr. Cant. The result was most satisfactory. Half a million Scotsmen (nearly half the nation) from every Lowland region except Royalist Aberdeen, signed a document implying that their King was trying to force Popery upon them.

Charles refused to believe that a people could be so united against him. His concessions came slowly, too slowly to rally the moderate men to his side, and powerless to affect the extremists. He abandoned his Prayer Book, rescinded King James's "Articles of Perth," practically destroyed the political power of bishops, and granted a Kirk Assembly to discuss settlement of all grievances. The Tables called it, but used an obsolete and illegal system of election in order to pack the parliament of the Kirk with laymen. "Not a gown among them," reported Lord Hamilton; "many swords and many more daggers."

It was at this Assembly that the King's most obstinate enemy declared himself: Argyle joined the Covenanters. Archibald, Earl of Argyle, was head of the vast Clan Campbell, hated and feared by the other Highlanders, commanding an army of 20,000 men. He himself had lived as a townsman and politician. Long ago he had come to London, and, while his own father warned the King to lock him up in prison and keep him there, Charles had tried to secure his friendship by doing him a good turn. It is difficult for any but a Presbyterian to speak of Argyle without prejudice, doubly difficult after a glance at his portrait, with the foxy, squinting eyes and pendulous nose. His advocates claim that he was a consistent, sincere, and able defender of the aspirations of contemporary Scotland, but they cannot deny that he was unscrupulous, callous, vindictive, and a coward of the first water. He was to be Montrose's life enemy, but now Montrose was in his party and marching to attack the Northern Royalists. He



succeeded in breaking their power. The Covenant was supreme in Scotland.

Charles had long been preparing for war; his main plan was to blockade Scottish ports with the navy, and the Border with English militia: meanwhile he asked Wentworth to send Irish troops to Scotland, attack Argyle's lands, and rally what loyalists could be found. He had also taken one step by which he has incurred, not altogether unjustly, a terrible odium: he had asked, unsuccessfully, for the loan of Spanish troops.<sup>1</sup>

The problem was becoming a military one; its issue depended on three armies now afoot in Charles's kingdoms: and the King saw every advantage in his enemies' hands.

The most efficient were Wentworth's Irishmen, loyal, well-paid, and trained over a period of years. But they were few in numbers, and there were two objections to their employment. Ireland was a conquered country; to denude it of troops was to invite rebellion; all Wentworth could do was to promise help when he had had time to recruit new regiments. Secondly, the majority of the soldiers were Roman Catholics: by using them at the decisive point, Charles would give a handle to the most dangerous of calumnies. Indeed, the Irish troops were immensely valuable to his enemies, used as a bogey. Rumour multiplied their numbers and ferocity, and honest Englishmen lived in terror of having their throats cut by imported hordes of Papist savages.

The second army was that of the Covenant, apparently well-paid, provisioned, and equipped, and including a number of Highlanders to whom war was the routine of life. It also included a high proportion of Scottish veterans from the German wars. It was commanded by the little crook-backed Leslie, who had served thirty years in the Swedish ranks and been knighted by Gustavus Adolphus. He was cousin to a Covenanting Peer, and had been recalled

<sup>1</sup> One cannot be sure whether he already knew that the Scots had asked help from Richelieu.

from Germany, slipping through the cordon of English ships. He was a mere soldier of fortune and probably cared little for the Covenant. But his men cared much; they were under strict discipline; they knew, or thought they knew, for what they were fighting.

On the other side of the Border lay King Charles, looking at Leslie's encampment through a new-fangled telescope. Henrietta had begged him not to go in person, and indeed the danger was no imaginary one. The troops began by showing great enthusiasm, but there was a woeful lack of trained and experienced men. To reinforce the northern militia, Charles, always the mediævalist and always penniless, had summoned his Peers according to the ancient custom, to pay for their land by military service. Partly as a result of this, partly through Court intrigue, Charles had hampered himself with Arundel, Holland, and Essex as commanders. The first two knew nothing of war; Arundel was soon to profess disgust at all politics, retire to continental picture galleries, and leave England to its fate; Holland, a mere courtier, was to change sides thrice during the Civil War and bring nothing but money to either; Essex, probably still loyal, possibly in correspondence with the Scots, would soon be a convinced Roundhead. The worst feature of the situation was the lack of money. The army was paid and provisioned largely by the generosity of the King's friends, by a gift from the clergy, and by a loan that Henrietta had contrived to raise among the English Catholics: for these long-suffering loyalists knew that the dark sky would grow darker above them with the triumph of principles such as inspired the Covenant.

Charles decided on negotiation. He began with a proclamation which the Scots promised to read publicly in their camp and then read privately in a tent to a few officers who knew its contents already. He declared that he had come to clear himself "of that notorious slander . . . that I shut my ears to the just complaints of my people of Scotland." He promised to submit political

grievances to a Parliament at Edinburgh, religion to a Kirk Assembly. The Scots could not meet his argument that the late Assembly had been elected on an illegal system and under considerable pressure. They promised to dissolve the Tables, and restore the royal castles they had captured in Scotland. Both armies were to disband. Such was the treaty of Berwick, broken as soon as signed.

The Scots put it about that Charles had promised to ratify anything and everything that Parliament and Assembly voted. Meanwhile they insisted on excluding the bishops from their seats. They then abolished episcopacy altogether. Charles consented to this as a provisional matter, but refused to accept it as a permanent arrangement. They replied by reconstituting their Parliament, denying his right even to prorogue it, and insisting that the royal castles should only be handed over to commanders approved by themselves. "There is a Scottish proverb," wrote Charles, "that bids you put two locks on your door when you have made friends with your foe."

The usual justification for the Scottish breach of faith is that King Charles could not be trusted, that there was a real fear of his revoking all concessions, admittedly reluctant, as soon as he had military strength. It would be a better reason for not signing a treaty than for breaking one already signed. And there is no trace of renewed preparations to coerce Scotland until the Scots had made it quite clear that they were not going to abide by the treaty.

If rebellion means anything, then Argyle and his friends were rebels. They were twisting the agreement of Berwick into a revolutionary instrument more potent than their army. And that army, disbanded now, could spring to life a good deal quicker than Charles could raise forces to punish them. Unpunished rebellion is a contagious thing, and there were plenty of English malcontents learning from the Covenanters how a King may be reduced to impotence. Charles could rely on no one. Hamilton had long ago got a foot into the Covenanting

camp. Half the English nobles were indifferent. It was said that the Berwick negotiations had been hurried on because the great lord Pembroke wanted to get home to his hunting and hawking. There was only one man whose loyalty and serious purpose there could be no doubt, and that was Wentworth. It might be dangerous to employ him in England, for Yorkshire and Ireland had taught him drastic methods, but there are times when nothing matters so much as loyalty and energy, and Charles sent for Wentworth. Wentworth obtained at last his long-sought Earldom, and took the name of Strafford. He was a sick man, he was tired, he had eighteen months to live : but it was not sickness that killed him.

His first advice was bold : a Parliament must be called. The King must end the eleven years' grievance, the King must have money. Charles accepted, not without trepidation : he suspected that there would be some members at least in active correspondence with the Scots. Strafford hurried back to Dublin, held an Irish Parliament, and bullied it into voting a large sum of money and voting it unanimously. There was much enthusiasm and many hard words for the Covenanters. If Strafford found one-tenth of such loyalty at Westminster, his advice would be abundantly justified.

At the English elections there was great canvassing and many accusations of bribery and pressure. But when the Houses met, no one knew what to expect. The opposition opened a long catalogue of grievances, the lead being taken by a gentleman with the scarcely credible name of Harbottle Grimston. He was seconded by Edmund Waller the poet, a cousin of Hampden's.<sup>1</sup> Waller attributed all evils to the "intended union between us and Rome," and compared England under recent taxation to Job when "it pleased God . . . to take all that he had

<sup>1</sup> He was to do some of the most remarkable feats of coat-turning during the next twenty years. His last and best was to follow up a eulogy of Cromwell with rhymed rejoicings, three years later, at Cromwell's death.

from him." To Waller himself the comparison was unapt, for he was a very rich man, had married a City heiress worth £40,000, and had probably not paid £100 in taxes during the last ten years. Pym was more sensible, and it was upon his list of grievances that the House went into Committee: it included the relaxation of the Penal Laws; the preaching of absolutism from pulpit and Bench; the excesses of the Prerogative Courts; the dissolution and intermission of Parliaments, and the infringement of their privileges; Tonnage and Poundage, knighthoods, monopolies, forests, ship-money—every expedient whereby Charles had secured a revenue independent of Parliament.

For a week Charles allowed the committees to talk unhindered. But the longer they did so, postponing the discussion of war funds, the bolder would the Scots become. He appealed to the Lords, showing them a letter, discovered in Edinburgh, asking for King Louis's help. The Peers showed less indignation than he hoped, but they sent a message to the Commons suggesting that it was time money was debated: even from this twenty-five dissented, among them Essex, Brooke, and Saye. The Commons described the inoffensive communication as a breach of their privilege to be sole controllers of finance. Charles sent them a direct message, offering to abandon ship-money if they could vote some other method of maintaining the navy, and demanding funds for war.

The test of Strafford's experiment had come, for upon the Commons' answer hung the whole question, raised for the last time, whether King or Parliament could work peaceably together. On it hung also the history of England. And it is just at this point that our knowledge of what happened becomes most scanty and untrustworthy.

What may be called the Royalist version is based mainly on Clarendon. Clarendon was then plain Mr. Hyde, an eye-witness and protagonist, and so far from being a Royalist as yet that he was soon to help in the impeaching of Strafford. His account is simple and

intelligible, though it involves one great difficulty which prevents its being accepted in full. It depends on personalities rather than political principles and, largely on that ground, has been dismissed as worthless.

The key position was held by old Sir Harry Vane, the king's secretary and his spokesman in the Commons. He undoubtedly hated Strafford: he was accused of wishing for a dissolution on personal grounds, because he was afraid that the Commons would attack a mischievous monopoly from which he drew much profit: he was soon to join the opposition, and, incidentally, to earn its contempt. It was his duty to lay the King's proposals before the Commons. After a long argument in Council, Strafford persuaded Charles to ask for about a million and a half pounds: to ask more, Strafford believed, would be to court refusal. Vane was given his instructions according to Strafford's opinion. Next day Vane arose in the Commons and asked for well over two millions. It is possible (though there is no scrap of evidence) that the King and Vane had had another meeting and decided to throw over the Council's opinion. Even now the Commons did not regard the sum as impossible. Glanville, Buckingham's old enemy, begged them to grant it, with tears in his eyes. Discussion arose, some thinking the amount excessive, some disliking a bargain with the King over ship-money, some wishing to include in the bargain the King's ancient right to make counties pay "coat and conduct" money—that is to provide food and clothing for the militia. Before discussion was ripe, Hampden rose to move for an immediate answer, yes or no, to the King. Hyde, convinced that this was a dishonest move to force on a deadlock, proposed further debate until the minor issues were clear and, meanwhile, a vote that the House intended to grant the King some money. While some members cried for Hampden, some for Hyde, Vane rose to say that debate was useless: the King would have his full demand or nothing at all. The House adjourned still undecided, and

Vane hurried off to the King to recommend a dissolution, <sup>at v</sup>there was no hope that the Commons "would give a penny."

There is one great weakness in the story, which prohibits its full acceptance. Vane may have done something dishonourable, but if his treachery had been so blatant, it is inconceivable that Charles should not have detected it within a few weeks and dismissed him. But Vane remained in royal service for another eighteen months.

The other story throws all responsibility on Charles. He is accused of plotting with Vane, behind Strafford's back, to make further debate impossible and give an excuse for dissolution. There is no evidence for this, but it is suggested that he thought the matter of "coat and conduct" money a critical one, that he may have heard that one member was questioning the legality of the press-gang, and wished to silence all such speakers by a dissolution. Or again, it is suggested that the King had heard of Pym's proposal for a petition that a new treaty should be made with the Scots, and dissolved the Houses to prevent so much encouragement being shown to rebels.

The odd thing is that there is a second eye-witness's account, coming from a decided Parliamentarian, and it leaves everything in doubt. Rushworth, clerk and historian to the Parliament, was later secretary to Fairfax and Cromwell. His statements are generally very accurate, but contemporaries accused him of false emphasis and the deliberate suppression of facts. He took full notes of the early debates, of Pym's speech, of Waller and the good Sir Harbottle. When he comes to the crucial moment he is practically silent. He merely says that the House debated the King's message and was dissolved: no word of Pym's petition, no word of "coat and conduct" money. It is dangerous to argue from silence, but for all Rushworth tells us, every Royalist contention might be true, the House loyal, Hampden cunning, Vane a deliberate traitor.

The Short Parliament had lasted three weeks. If we can only guess at the causes of its failure, the results were

apparent and disastrous. Clarendon says that as soon as Charles learnt how things lay, he bitterly regretted the dissolution and even asked whether it could be reversed. His opponents were in high feather. Clarendon met St. John an hour after, and was surprised to see the lawyer's gloomy face wreathed in smiles. St. John was glad of the dissolution: the Short Parliament had been too conciliatory and "could never have done what was necessary to be done—as indeed it would not, what he and his friends thought necessary."

If his Parliamentary experiment had failed, Strafford was determined to carry on vigorous war with the Scots. He thought Irish troops could be brought over. An English army was reassembling on the Border. One enthusiastic young officer wrote home, "We care not to aske" what happened in Parliament, if the rumour of strong reinforcements were true. But reinforcements cost money and the Commons had granted none. Their refusal seemed to Strafford to create a situation justifying the most drastic methods. An attempt to debase the silver coinage, as in modern fashion, was blocked by the merchants. Charles had long been angling for money from abroad, and was now marrying his daughter to a Dutchman in the vain hope of assistance: he can hardly have guessed that her son would one day lead over a Dutch army to dethrone James II. Henrietta wrote to the Pope for money, and was brought up short by a demand that Charles should first declare himself a Catholic, in secret if necessary. Strafford was plaguing the Spanish ambassador for a loan, and bullying the City merchants. The latter consented, then found out that there was a Jesuit in prison and unhanged, and demanded his blood as the price of their money. Charles had difficulty in saving the wretched man's life. Short of such a ghastly bargain, there was little left undone to raise money for the war.

The new army was levied largely in the southern counties, many of the men were Puritan, none had any



quarrel with the Scots. Discipline was poor; the officers debated whether the Petition of Right, forbidding Martial Law, prohibited the hanging of mutineers; meanwhile mutineers were beginning to murder their officers. One, a Roman Catholic, was martyred outside Wellington Church for refusing to join in Protestant worship. London provided a series of riots, tore down the Communion rails in churches, and tried to lynch Laud. A man was hanged, another—for the only time in the reign, the last time in English history—was put on the rack. The riots stopped, and London grew suddenly quiet.

Strafford had planned to invade Scotland, but it was the Scots who invaded first. Six peers, Brooke, Bedford, Essex, Mandeville, Scrope, and Warwick, had written to promise them help "in a free and legal way." The Scots wanted more unqualified support before they moved, and the Peers refused to set their hands to anything that made them liable for treason. But Savile, now acting as their secretary, blandly forged their names and sent a satisfactory document to Edinburgh. Thus encouraged, the Scots began to march with Leslie at their head. They carefully avoided giving offence in England, and paid for everything they took. They routed the King's ill-paid, ill-disciplined levies at Newburn Ford. They occupied Newcastle.

The King was beaten. He summoned his Peers to York and began to treat with the Scots. The first thing to be discovered was Savile's forgery. One might imagine that it would mark the ruin of his career. One would be wrong, for his career was just beginning. The victims of his forgery found it had been too fruitful to be punished. They had their signatures burnt, but the fruits remained. The next discovery was that the Scots were in no hurry to get things settled; they only wanted to stay in England and be handsomely paid for doing so. In other words, penniless Charles must call a Parliament and do all that it told him to do, just so long as the Scots cared to remain.

Such was the upshot of the two years that had passed since the riot in St. Giles'.

There are some who attribute it to the new Prayer Book, withdrawn a year ago, to Charles's mishandling and "duplicity," to the righteous indignation of the Scottish people. Others are suspicious of the curious neatness with which everything worked to the conclusion desired by his enemies, the independence of Scotland under the control of Argyle and his friends, the calling of an English Parliament, embittered by a recent dissolution, with a Scottish army to back its demands. Then, and for fifty years after, there was endless talk of collusion and a deliberate engineering of the crisis. Charles had the rooms of Brooke, Saye, Pym, and Hampden searched for incriminating evidence, but nothing was found. Documentary evidence is still lacking, and one may say that the culprits committed little to paper, or that they had time and motive enough during the next twenty years to cover their traces. On the other hand, one may dismiss the whole thing as an evil-minded suspicion. The important thing is that the Long Parliament was about to sit, that its demands would be irresistible so long as Leslie kept his men in England, that Leslie did not go home until the power of the English monarchy was crippled for ever.

The Long Parliament sat for nineteen years. It outlived the only man who could legally dissolve it, as it outlived Strafford and Pym, Laud and Essex and Cromwell. Proscription and civil war, co-option and "purges" at the point of the Cromwellian sword, radically altered its nature: Cromwell himself destroyed its House of Lords and expelled its Commons with a file of musketeers; but a ghost survived and came to life again. Of the members who trooped to Westminster in the autumn of 1640, there were one or two who lived to see that last session held in an England which had forgotten Pym and was waiting to give enthusiastic welcome to a second Charles, to adorn itself in ribbons and periwigs, to applaud Nell Gwynne, and provide matter for Mr. Pepys's Diary.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### UNJUDICIAL

1641

THERE had been two petitions for the summoning of the Long Parliament—one from the Scots, one from twelve English Peers. Now that it was meeting, there was little doubt that the Commons would have Scottish support ; but twelve Peers were not the House of Lords, nor was that body at the orders of Saye and Brooke, Mandeville and Essex. It soon became clear that the Lords were to be the deciding factor between King and Commons. For impeachments were in the air.

Charles summoned Strafford to London, promising that he should not "suffer in person, honour, or fortune." Strafford saw only one way in which Charles could keep his promise : they must stop opponents from an impeachment by carrying the war into the enemies' camp. Impeachments had always started from a majority in the Commons, but Strafford urged the King to arraign certain persons on his own initiative for treasonable correspondence with the Scots. He had seized Savile's messenger. He may have had evidence against some fellow-Peers, even against Pym and Hampden. But Pym struck first.

Strafford reached London on the evening of November 9. On the morning of the 11th the King held a review of soldiers at the Tower. In the Commons some one began to talk of a Popish plot. Pym rose, asked that the doors be locked, and demanded Strafford's impeachment. In a long speech he denounced him as an Apostate, the Counsellor who had ruined the Kingdom. He even reflected on his morals, and there must have been loud laughter in the

London taverns, where it was whispered that Lady Carlisle had been Strafford's mistress, and was now gracing Pym's bed. No doubt it was pure slander, but she was soon to be hand in glove with Pym.

Next came an Irishman called Clotworthy, an old enemy of Strafford. He was sitting for a small Devon borough, though no one could quite make out how he had managed it; "by the contrivance and recommendation of some powerful persons," says Clarendon, ". . . that so he might be enabled to act this part against the Lord-Lieutenant." His evidence was vague and hearsay, and some members thought it insufficient. The House even wandered off (ironically enough) into a discussion on the Penal Laws, until Pym recalled them, insisted on immediate impeachment, and gained his point. Pym carried up the message to the Lords, begging for summary arrest. Strafford strode into the House—perhaps, at the eleventh hour, to accuse his accuser. The Peers shouted to him to withdraw. Black Rod conducted him to the door, and soldiers to the Tower.

While they prepared the charges, the Commons sent to release Prynne and his fellow-prisoners, and summoned Windebank to their bar. Windebank fled to France. They impeached Laud, too old and too brave to fly; he joined Strafford in the Tower. Finch anticipated attack by coming to the Commons two days before Christmas and defending his work with the usual aggressiveness and great ability. The Commons impeached him before adjourning for their Christmas dinner. But Finch was dining at The Hague.

There were now vacant places to fill. Bristol joined the Council, but with him came Essex, Saye, and Bedford, while St. John became Solicitor-General. It has been suggested that Charles was making a feeble attempt to conciliate opinion. It would be probably nearer the mark to say that he was acting under a very considerable pressure. The new Councillors brought with them the forger Savile to sit at the Board. We know only too much nowadays

about the foisting of rascals into a place of honour, and it is not surprising to find Savile was soon to obtain a peerage.

The Commons now proceeded with a money bill to pay the Scots—£4250 a day was their figure—and with a bill for Triennial Parliaments. If the King issued no writs for three years, elections must proceed without his leave. It would put Government, said Charles, “almost off its hinges,” but he had to sign.

His best chance was that the Lords would defy the Commons and find Strafford innocent. By an unlucky chance, Arundel was senior Peer and President of the Court. Arundel was honest, but an enemy of Strafford, and honesty was to be sorely tried in the coming weeks. The trial was to go forward in Westminster Hall, before a huge audience. Ladies thronged the seats; the baiting of England's greatest man was one of the sights of town. A Scottish commissioner was disgusted at the way the audience chattered and sauntered, brought in their meals, and swilled beer and wine from the bottle. Charles had been put in a little box, hidden with lattice-work to prevent him overawing the judges; he tore down the lattice with his own hands. The prisoner was brought in, stooping, crippled with illness, and in great pain. His enemies hoped he might spoil his case with such bursts of rage as had terrified Yorkshire squires and Irish officials; but they were disappointed. He submitted himself humbly to his peers, not doubting their justice. “His behaviour,” says a Parliamentary, “was exceeding graceful, and his speech full of weight, reason, and pleasingness.” Denied counsel to speak for him, he occasionally consulted the lawyers at his side. His private secretary, Radcliffe, might have been more useful, but he was out of reach; Clotworthy had seen to that by starting a prosecution against Radcliffe in the Dublin law courts. But Strafford alone was more than a match for his enemies. For twelve years his great power of brain, his penetrating exactness, had been busy in the

service of the King ; now he turned them to the task of saving himself from a dishonourable death.

Many of the charges were ridiculous, mere " flym-flam," as he called them, and some the prosecution dropped hurriedly. Pym argued that though no single one was sufficient, yet the sum of all amounted to High Treason. Such an argument is bad law, but it is a fair plea in a political crisis—on the one condition, that each charge can be proved beyond dispute. There were few indeed that Pym could bring within any distance of proof.

The first was a lie—that Strafford had extracted from Charles unusually despotic powers for the Council of the North : Strafford's Commission as President did not differ materially from that of his predecessor, now supplying evidence for the prosecution. The second, that he had intimidated justices, could only be substantiated by misdating and probably misquoting an angry remark he had made in Court.

The Irish charges were more serious. There was no doubt that Strafford had broken the law, and there was no lack of men, Cork and Mountnorris among them, to supply evidence against him. Strafford pleaded the conditions of Ireland to a Westminster as ignorant of them as it has always been ; he roundly asserted that there had been more justice and even legality in his time than in that of former governors ; he strenuously denied that anything he had done could possibly amount to High Treason. Finally, he appealed to the benefits Ireland had gained by his rule. Pym ridiculed them : if the revenue had increased, Strafford had pocketed the surplus (Strafford showed that he had actually lost money, not gained) : if churches were built or restored, there had been no spiritual edification (much depended on Puritan Pym's idea of edification) : Strafford had appointed a groom to be parson of two parishes (the " groom " was an M.A. of Dublin, and his double stipend amounted to £150) : one of Strafford's bishops had just been detected and executed for

unnatural vice (Strafford pleaded he was not omniscient, and a clergyman applying for a bishopric would hardly confess to sodomy). And it was High Treason that Pym had to prove.

Finally, there were the charges relating to the last eighteen months. Strafford had betrayed the King by engineering the dissolution of the Short Parliament, counselling the continuance of ship-money and the raising of other unparliamentary revenue ; he had urged aggression against Scotland, and the reduction of England by Irish troops : when war with Scotland came, Strafford had deliberately betrayed the King's army to defeat at Newburn Ford. The last charge was too ridiculous to be pressed. To approve ship-money, sanctioned by the judges, was hardly treason ; and Strafford had fought against the dissolution of Parliament.

When Strafford had replied to the several charges, he pleaded, in final defence, that such as the Lords considered proved could not possibly amount to High Treason. The only dangerous accusation was that relating to the Irish troops. Sir Harry Vane charged Strafford with recommending at Council that they should be used against the disaffected in England ; Vane said that he had taken notes of his words, but the King had ordered him to burn them. There had been six other Councillors present : Laud was now in prison, Finch abroad ; the other four denied that Strafford had given any such counsel.

The impeachment was breaking down. It was useless to plead that the details of the evidence were immaterial, because Strafford was a notorious enemy of Liberty. Even if it were true, the Lords were a Court of Law and they were there to see justice done on strict proofs. There was one remedy for Strafford's enemies to adopt : Pym eschewed it, and the proposal came from Hazlerig, Lord Brooke's brother-in-law : the Commons must drop the impeachment and substitute Attainder. No judicial procedure was necessary, no examination of evidence. The Lords ceased to be a Court of Law. The Commons must

simply vote a Bill declaring Strafford to be a public danger and induce the Lords to pass it. It had been a favourite Tudor method for using subservient Parliaments to remove an inconvenient nobleman: Hazlerig was stepping into the shoes of bluff King Hal.

In the ensuing debate Bristol's son Digby deserted his former friends. He had voted for impeachment by judicial process, but he could not stomach this Attainder, this creating of a new crime, calling it treason, and then killing a man for former breaches of the new law. Such a precedent would make bloodshed the end of every political disagreement, even, Digby insinuated, of every private feud. The House threw him a sop (blackening its own case in the process) by voting that the attainder of Strafford must not be considered a precedent. It is significant of the state of political feeling that at such a crisis barely half the House had troubled to attend.

The Lords were indignant. They had just quarrelled with an outrageous demand from the Commons, that new charges should be brought and Strafford allowed no time to collect evidence for their refutation. They now refused to drop the trial. Pym and Hampden persuaded the Commons to let impeachment and attainder proceed side by side. But a grave error had been made, and the Lords' eyes were beginning to open to what was really going on. Something must be done to destroy the majority in the Lords which would certainly block the Attainder, to restore a shaken faith in the Commons' honesty of purpose, and save Pym and his friends from a disgraceful fiasco, perhaps from political ruin. Pym had two cards up his sleeve.

Sir Harry Vane, on whose testimony so much depended, had a son and namesake. Young Harry and Pym now came forward with a curious story. Long ago Vane had got hold of his father's keys and used them to rifle a certain cabinet, covered with red velvet. There, he said, he had found the Council notes, since burnt, had read how Strafford advised the King to bring over Irish Papists "to



reduce this kingdom," and taken a copy of the words. Six months ago, with the burden of his secret still oppressing him, he happened to be talking to Pym about the "sad condition of England." He had opened his heart to Pym. Pym now felt the moment had come to show the Commons young Harry's copy of his father's notes.

The story was an exceedingly fishy one, and the whole business was suspected to be an elaborate comedy. Old Harry blustered and swore he did not know what his son had been doing. He may have been speaking the truth. But it is a little difficult to see why, if there was any foundation for the story, Pym had kept it to himself until this decisive moment. It is still more difficult to forgive Pym for the argument he based upon it. To prove High Treason, two witnesses are necessary to each fact: the elder Vane had taken the notes, the younger had copied them, and that made two.

So much for impeachment and the marshalling of evidence. The Lords were hardly likely to be impressed. And Strafford had already said that if he used the phrase "this kingdom" he had meant rebellious Scotland, then under discussion at Council. But for the attainder no evidence was necessary. The Peers might yet be frightened or persuaded into voting Strafford a public danger. Essex had said, "Stone dead hath no fellow," St. John that "it was no foul play to knock foxes and wolves on the head." But Essex was not the House of Lords. Not a third of that body was in favour of Strafford's execution. Something must be done about the other two-thirds. Pym played his second card, and it was the ace of trumps.

It was put into his hands by the treachery of an officer in the King's army. No army is a natural lover of Parliaments, and this one was discontented, ill-paid, and tired of watching large chests of money proceed along the Great North Road to keep Scottish rebels in comfort. One such load, £50,000 of cash, had been designed to pay the King's army and then suddenly diverted to the Scots' camp by

an order from the Commons. Here was good material for a Royalist plot among the soldiers. Carefully planned, resolutely handled, it might save Strafford and restore the King's authority. The slightest mishandling would destroy both. Unfortunately it was in the hands of Queen Henrietta and her indiscreet friends.

She had long forgotten her antipathy to Strafford—perhaps by concentrating attention on his beautiful hands; she had been holding midnight colloquies with Pym and Hampden at the backdoors of Whitehall. Candle in hand, she smiled and begged and bribed; she thought she was helping Strafford. Now there came to her some army officers: two happened to be poets, John Suckling the disreputable lover, and Davenant, who used to boast that his father kept the inn where Shakespeare stayed at Oxford on his journeys home, that his mother had been great friends with Shakespeare, that poetic talent is hereditary—and rare among innkeepers. Other accomplices were the Queen's secretary, Jermyn, a peer or two, and the unpleasant creature, young George Goring. The plot developed into a project for bringing the army up to seize London, and establish a military despotism. In this form it was suggested to Charles. He would not hear of it. The most he would allow was a plan to rescue Strafford from the Tower by military force. Goring misliked such a paltry conclusion: he misliked it still more when the conspirators refused to make him lieutenant-general. He went and told Bedford and Mandeville of the whole design. It was April 1, but they believed him. And they told Pym.

Pym bided his time for a month. He waited till the morning when a small party of soldiers was sent to the Tower to demand admission in the King's name. The Lieutenant of the Tower was a Scot, possibly a friend of Pym's: he kept the gates shut. Meanwhile Pym was speaking in the Commons; he produced a Protestation against Popery, drawn up, with the help of a Scottish commissioner, on the lines of the Covenant; it was signed

in the Commons and sent out to the City, where it received 20,000 signatures. Twenty thousand Londoners believed that the Papists were about to cut their throats, and armed mobs of shopkeepers began to mass in the streets. Pym had told the Commons that there was a Popish plot on foot to "overthrow this kingdom." Then, three days after the incident at the Tower, Pym disclosed what he had heard from Goring. The House locked its doors; when a gallery began to give way under two unusually fat members, some one cried out that there was a second Gunpowder Plot. The City trained bands were summoned to protect Parliament from Papists, and marched to Covent Garden before they were told that obesity, not Guy Fawkes, had caused the alarm. Pym was embroidering Goring's story with suggestions of a French invasion to help King Charles; as Richelieu was Pym's well-wisher and, as some whispered, his paymaster, there was a nice irony in the tale. Parliament asked for the ports to be stopped up, and appointed a secret committee, headed by Pym, Hampden, and Clotworthy, to investigate the danger. In the atmosphere thus created, the Lords began to debate the Attainder Bill.

The stopping of the ports had let loose a thousand unemployed sailors in the streets, and the rioting became very dangerous. At the beginning of the trial, the crowd outside had "saluted" Strafford, "and he them with great humility and courtesy." Now they were besieging Westminster, threatening Bristol for his obstinate impartiality, and Digby for speaking against Attainder, posting up a list of the fifty-nine "traitors" in the Commons who had voted against the Bill. The Court believed that the whole feeling had been artificially worked up. It detected Lord Pembroke encouraging a mob to shout against Strafford. One of the rioters confessed that "the Parliament men had sent for them." And it was curious that one crowd had vanished to their homes at a mere word from the House of Commons. But when the

Lords met to debate the third reading of the Attainder Bill, their coaches were besieged by armed mobs crying for Justice and Execution. The streets were unsafe for any who believed the two words were not synonymous. Of 150 Peers, about a hundred were accustomed to arrive for debate. On this crucial day, only 46 entered the House. Eleven brave men voted against the Bill. It was passed. Pym had succeeded.

His defenders say, and with reason, that in a crisis a politician must not be too scrupulous; that Strafford was a traitor to English liberty, if not in English law; that he had to be destroyed in order that a new England might arise. There is much truth in such contentions, as well as much ignorance. But if murder was done for the sake of liberty, it was only such liberty as comes from the transference of sovereignty into the hands of Parliament, of committees, and of public petitions. It was just these things that were defaced in the process, just these on which was laid a curse that has never been lifted. If the atmosphere of Parliament to-day is curiously repellent to a casual onlooker, it is to be remembered that its victory was sealed by the blood of Strafford and of the hundreds of men for whose death the unjudicial murder suggested a model.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Commons' vote might prevent Strafford's attainder being quoted as a legal precedent, it could not prevent the evil example. The next fifty years were to be filled with wild accusations of "Treason" and horribly frequent executions, the worst being those connected with the so-called Popish Plot, when Shaftesbury had perfected Pym's methods.

Strafford himself warned the Lords of the danger: "Except your Lordships' wisdoms provide for it, it may be the shedding of my blood may make way for the tracing" (? hunting) "of yours. . . . If such learned gentlemen as these" (the prosecuting counsel), "whose tongues are well acquainted with such proceedings, shall be started out against you; if your friends, your counsel, denied access to you; if your professed enemies admitted to witness against you; if every word, intention, or circumstance of yours be sifted and alleged as treasonable, not because of a Statute, but because of a consequence or construction of lawyers, pieced up in a high rhetorical strain, and a number of supposed probabilities—I leave it to your Lordships' consideration to foresee what may be the issue of such dangerous and recent precedents."

Meanwhile, there was one organ of government over which Pym had no control. The Bill had passed the two Houses: it was not law until it received the signature of King Charles.

Charles had attempted to rescue Strafford from the Tower: his failure had been disastrous. He had seen Pym privately, twice; we shall never know what passed between the two men, but it was thought that Charles offered him high office to save Strafford's life, and that Pym refused. Finally, he had adopted Lord Saye's advice. After the Restoration, when Saye had fished successfully in twenty years of troubled water and earned the nickname of "Old Subtlety," it was believed that Saye's suggestion was made with intention to betray. It was simple and sounded reasonable: it was recommended by Bristol and Savile. Charles must summon the two Houses to a conference, admit that Strafford was guilty of many "oversights" and "misdemeanours," and promise not to employ him again; but he must tell Parliament that they were using a charge of High Treason to kill a man who had committed no treason. Charles did so, taking occasion to deny that Strafford had suggested the use of the Irishmen in England or had ever counselled despotism. It is impossible to doubt that an acceptance of the King's offer would have helped to save England from the terrible woes that ensued. But both Houses professed indignation at it as an attempt to interfere with the course of justice.

Charles still hoped to save his servant's life, wrote promising to do so, in spite of the "strange mistaking and conjuncture of these times." Now the House had passed their Bill. On Saturday morning it lay awaiting the Royal signature. On Sunday evening it was still unsigned. Outside the windows of Whitehall a mob still roared for Strafford's blood. To refuse assent could hardly save him from their violence. The Constable of the Tower had openly boasted that he would execute the prisoner with

or without the royal warrant. It was not Strafford's life that was at stake now, it was King Charles's honour.

He had been accused of every fault, never of deserting a servant. He had supported Buckingham in the teeth of terrible storms, he had supported men wiser and better than Buckingham, as well as men more foolish and corrupt. He had taken on himself the consequences of their actions. Now he was asked to assist in destroying the wisest and best of all.

The Lords came to beg for his signature. The Queen was weeping before his eyes ; what counsel she gave, we do not know, but she and her children were in certain danger from the bloodthirsty crowd. The lawyers gave their opinion and they echoed Pym ; no single charge was treasonable, but the sum of all might amount to treason. The Council met and was more honest ; it refused to pronounce on Strafford's guilt, but a king " must be more tender of the safety of the kingdom than of any one person, how innocent soever." The Bishops came, and twisted religion to urge signature " even for conscience' sake." Their natural leader was in the Tower now, but one can hardly doubt what Laud's counsel would have been. As it was, only two were worthy of their Master : Ussher from Ireland, Strafford's friend ; Juxon, who was to be at Charles's side when it was his turn to tread a scaffold. Men might talk of political consequences, reinterpret the law, wrench religion from its hinges. Still the King's mind was dominated by one thought—" This man hath done nothing worthy of death." It was a strange fate that put such a man as Charles in the place of Pontius Pilate.

Perhaps he would never have done it but for Strafford's letter ; it had been six days in his pocket. It is too long to quote in full, though there is hardly a phrase in it uncharged with tragic meaning. When we grow weary of the " thrills " of modern fiction, we might do worse than read again Strafford's last letter to his King.

“ May it please Your Sacred Majesty,—

“ It hath been my greatest grief in all these troubles, to be taken as a person who should endeavour to represent and set things amiss between Your Majesty and Your People, and to give counsels tending to the disquiet of the Three Kingdoms. . . .

“ Nay, it is most mightily mistaken ; for unto Your Majesty it is well known my poor and humble advices concluded still in this—that Your Majesty and Your People could never be happy, till there was a right understanding betwixt you and them ; and that no other means were left to effect and settle this happiness, but by the Counsel and assent of Your Parliament. . . .

“ Yet such is my misfortune, that this Truth findeth little credit ; yea, the contrary seemeth generally to be believed, and myself reputed as one who endeavoured to make a separation between You and Your People. Under a heavier censure than this I am persuaded no gentleman can suffer. . . .

“ This bringeth me in a very great strait ; there is before me the ruin of my Children and Family, hitherto untouched, in all the Branches of it, with any foul crime. Here are before me the many ills which may befall Your Sacred Person and the whole Kingdom, should Yourself and Parliament part less satisfied one with the other than is necessary for the preservation both of King and People. Here are before me the two things most valued, most feared by mortal men, Life or Death.

“ To say, Sir, that there hath not been a strife in me, were to make me less man than, God knoweth, my infirmities make me. . . .

“ But, with much sadness, I am come to a resolution of that which I take to be best becoming me, and to look upon it as that which is most principal in itself . . . the Prosperity of Your Sacred Person and the Commonwealth, things infinitely before any private man’s interest. And therefore in few words, as I put myself wholly upon the

Honour and Justice of my Peers . . . so now, to set Your Majesty's Conscience at liberty, I do most humbly beseech Your Majesty for the prevention of evils which may happen by Your refusal, to pass this Bill, and by this means to remove—praised be God, I cannot say this accursed, but, I confess,—this unfortunate thing, forth of the way towards that blessed Agreement which God, I trust, shall ever establish between You and Your Subjects.

"Sir, my consent should more acquit you herein to God than all the world can do beside. To a willing man there is no injury done. And as, by God's grace, I forgive all the world, with a calmness and meekness of infinite contentment to my dislodging soul, so, Sir, to you I can give the life of this world with all the cheerfulness imaginable, in the just acknowledgement of Your exceeding favours; and only beg of Your Goodness you would vouchsafe to cast Your gracious Regard upon my poor son and his three sisters. . . .

"God long preserve Your Majesty.

"Your Majesty's most faithful and humble  
Subject and Servant,

"STRAFFORD."

Late on Sunday evening, Charles called a second Council. Their opinion was unaltered. Charles must do the unpardonable thing, the thing for which he never forgave himself until the day of his own death. He gave way. He excused himself by saying that his wife and children must be saved from the mob. He promised, next day, to sign the Attainder.

When they told Strafford, the iron self-control that had prompted his letter broke down for an instant. "Put not your trust in princes!" he exclaimed bitterly. But when a friend suggested that Charles might satisfy the Opposition and save his servant by offering to abolish bishops, he replied that he would not "buy his life at so dear a rate."



Charles sent a last letter to the Peers, begging, though the Bill was law, for a remittance of the death penalty; even delay, he added, would be a charity. The postscript was fatal, it suggested that a last attempt of rescue might be contemplated. Charles may have intended one, or he may merely have hoped that certain people would change their minds. But the Lords were obdurate: they professed themselves alarmed for the Queen's safety. "Stone dead hath no fellow."

They refused Strafford leave to see his friend Laud, unless he petitioned Parliament: Strafford would have no more to do with Parliament, for he was now before "an Higher Court, where neither partiality is to be expected nor error feared." They refused him leave for private execution inside the walls. Friends were expected to attend a friend's execution; the "patient" claimed their prayers and encouragement. Strafford had to face serried thousands of his enemies. But as he passed out to Tower Hill, Laud's hands were stretched through the window-bars to bless him.

He told the crowd he forgave all enemies, with heart, not lips: it had been his "ill-hap to be misconstrued." The executioner prayed for the customary forgiveness for himself: for "you and all the world," said Strafford. He was laying down his life for peace and goodwill in England, and he was not the man to spoil the sacrifice with last-minute rancour.

He was a soldierly man and without fear. His calmness steadied others in the ghastly business at which none could have been expert: it was twenty years since Raleigh had been beheaded. A single stroke released his "dislodging soul" to its rest.

Two tales remain to be told. At the crisis of the trial it had been noticed that Pym faltered, searched his notes in vain, stood silent and ashamed for quite a time. His friend the Scottish commissioner attributed it to an act of God—"to humble the man." The great poet Browning

has suggested that it was rather remorse for an old friend and comrade. The two theories are not incompatible, and perhaps the Scotsman was right.

The second is a trifle. On the night of the execution, a number of gentlemen sat drinking in the Cross Keys Tavern. They argued whether Strafford had died a Christian or no ; one suggested that he was a Papist, one a Puritan, another an atheist. " Why trouble ye us with this damned fellow ? " said a certain Mr. Lambert. " He is as sure damned as I will break this glass ! " He threw the wineglass up in the air. It hit the ceiling, it hit the wall, it hit the floor. But it did not break.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### APPEAL

1642

A DISASTROUS chain of events had led Charles to the humiliation and dishonour of Strafford's death. Its first link had been an attempt to assimilate Scottish worship to that of England; now it looked as if his opponents would make a converse error. Pym's majority in the Commons was already threatened by the question of the bishops. Some members wanted the Church to remain an "established" institution, controlled by experts independent of laymen, dependent on the Crown. Others were embarking on a course that could only end in remodelling her to match the Presbyterian Kirk. As always, the question of principle involved a question of money. England had escaped proper taxation for years. It was taxed now, but the burden might be lightened by abolishing bishops and confiscating episcopal revenues.

For the moment the attempt, resisted by a strong minority in the Commons, was blocked by the Lords, who refused even to exclude bishops from the Upper House. The only agreement was on the subject of diminishing the Royal Prerogative. Parliament first established its position by forcing Charles to renounce the right to dissolve it without its leave. All his expedients for financial independence were voted down, ship-money, knighthood, forest enlargement, unparliamentary Customs dues. Then the Prerogative Courts were swept away, Star Chamber, the Council for Wales, the Council for the North, High Commission.

No one can doubt that they had been arbitrary instru-

ments of monarchy. High Commission had handed Prynne over to Star Chamber for his cruel sentence: it had persecuted Puritans with fines and reprimands. It has been calculated that such activities represent about 5 per cent. of its cases. The remaining 95 per cent. were not begun on its own initiative, they were brought before it by any one who preferred High Commission to the ordinary courts. One such case may be set beside Prynne's. Two poor men accused a merchant of adultery. They forfeit sympathy by asking blackmail. The merchant rushed them before Quarter Sessions and had them condemned to such floggings that one "lost his voice and almost his reason," the other died under the lash. The survivor appealed to High Commission.<sup>1</sup>

Of the Council for the North we have already spoken. Its abolition, says Dr. Reid, was "highly profitable to the judges and lawyers," but "established a judicial system which, at least in the North, amounted to an absolute denial of justice to poor men."

If such were some of the remoter results of the landslide that was now destroying English monarchy, there was no doubt of its immediate cause: an army of Scots was still encamped in England. Parliament had no particular use for it now that Strafford was dead and the Prerogative in ruins; and it was extremely expensive. Pym, prefiguring the confiscations of the Civil War, proposed to pay the Scots by seizing the estates of "those who had caused the mischief." He even suggested a Forced Loan on London, but for this amazing attempt to take a page out of King Charles's book he was called to order by the Commons. The obvious remedy was to send the Scots home.

Charles had a notion that he might make use of them, now that they had become a burden on their former paymasters. He announced his intention of visiting Scotland. Parliament could not prevent him, it could only send

<sup>1</sup> *Cal. of State Papers*. Dom. 406. 75. ? 1638.

They accused Montrose and, by implication, King Charles, stirred up all kinds of rumours, and added verisimilitude to them by running out of Edinburgh. Charles rode to Parliament and begged, with tears in his eyes, for an open investigation; it was refused, for matters must be sifted in secret. For days he argued. "However the matter go," he said, "I must see myself cleared"; a secret inquiry was "a private way to Hell." Parliament refused his request—"just and reasonable," as he truthfully called it. His credit in Scotland was ruined, whatever support he had gained was destroyed. When Argyle returned in triumph, he had to give him a pension and a Marquisate, Hamilton a Dukedom, Leslie, the illiterate soldier, the Earldom of Leven.

On top of everything came the news from Ireland. Strafford had hinted at danger, and even suggested that his own arraignment might prove the signal for rebellion. The deputies who succeeded him were a stupid soldier and an adventurer grown rich by evicting Irishmen from their land. Strafford had been high-handed, but he had been honest and well-intentioned; his successors were neither. Six months after his death, England heard that the Papists had risen and slaughtered three hundred thousand English—men, women, and children—with fiendish barbarity.

It was not the truth, though the truth was sufficiently appalling. The Irish had determined to reverse the plantation of Ulster by evicting English intruders. Some of their leaders had tried to do it without bloodshed, some had not cared. There was much deliberate murder and some bad atrocities. Many of the English had been stripped of clothing as well as land, and died of starvation and exposure. Perhaps ten thousand had perished thus, five thousand been deliberately killed.

The blame has been laid partly on Charles, but the charge is unproven. He had been corresponding with the Catholic Lords who later joined the rebellion. They were grumbling that the Scots had secured Presbyterianism by

rebellion, while Ireland's religion was still proscribed. It is probable that Charles promised them some form of toleration in return for support, and they may have twisted this into an argument that rebellion would have the King's sanction.

This hypothetical accusation of blundering was embroidered at the time into a story that Charles had ordered a Papist massacre. The evidence was supplied in curious fashion. There is still extant an order, signed in the King's name, requiring the Catholics to seize Protestant strongholds. It is dated October 1, 1641; it is sealed with the Royal Seal of Scotland; it is a palpable forgery. No one knows who held the seal on October 1, for it was passing from a retiring Chancellor to his successor. Whoever had charge of it that day has a great deal to answer for; but he had struck a shrewd blow at the King's reputation.

It is a curious feature of many Revolutions that all their permanent results are achieved in a few months or even weeks, with little or no bloodshed. There follow years of agony, while extremists and reactionaries struggle with each other, and then a settlement on the former basis. It was so with England in the middle of the seventeenth century. By the end of 1641, our constitution was, roughly speaking, that of the 1660 Restoration. The years between produced nothing but evil memories.

Charles had accepted the new settlement; no doubt he resented it in private, but there is little sign of any plans to overthrow it. Meanwhile Pym was losing his unquestioned majority in the Commons; his friends among the Peers were in the minority again, the two Houses were at odds over the bishops. A balance of powers, each impotent against the other, might possibly have given England peace.

That hope was destroyed by the Irish rebellion. The problem became a military one again. Charles was active and urgent about the necessity for crushing the Irish

Papists. The Commons professed a like enthusiasm, but they showed themselves as dilatory and grudging as could be; while they bickered with the King about money and recruiting and army appointments, the flame licked up Protestantism in Ulster and spread through the length and breadth of Ireland. They can hardly be blamed. They were quite sure that Charles would use any army he obtained to reverse all that the Long Parliament had done. He probably had no immediate intention of so doing, but no one could calculate what might happen when a victorious army returned home in a year or so from reconquered Ireland. There was no calling Strafford from the grave, but Pym and Hampden and Essex might join him there. A situation had arisen with which no constitution could deal. Men had utterly ceased to trust one another, there was no stability, no assurance that achievement might not be followed by defeat. And Parliament had fixed the penalty of defeat: it was death.

The struggle for army control was complicated by the struggle over the bishops. A considerable Royalist party was forming in the Commons. London was inventing the nicknames of "Roundhead" and "Cavalier."

Cromwell was beginning to become prominent in the Commons, though he was nearly shouted down for a disappointing speech about the bishops. He saw no necessity for bishops to be so rich. He contradicted the argument that to abolish them was to undermine the class-system. Bishops could go, while the gentry remained the gentry. Cromwell was in Pym's camp, with his kinsmen Hampden and St. John. He was slow to recognize that another was forming.

The split was defined by the Grand Remonstrance, a vote of no confidence in King Charles's government, or his sincerity in maintaining the concessions wrung from him. Cromwell told Falkland there would be little trouble in getting it passed. It was noon when the final debate began, embittered by bad news from Ireland and rumours of a

second Army Plot.<sup>1</sup> While the light lasted, the talk went on, and when darkness came the candles shone on angry faces. The Royalist minority claimed the right of a minority to register a public protest of disagreement; one of them was sent to the Tower for pressing the claim. Swords, still scabbarded, were brandished between the debaters; at one time it looked as though they would be drawn and St. Stephen's Chapel witness the first battle of the Civil War. But a peaceful vote was taken—159 Ayes, 148 Noes. It was four in the morning, but the Remonstrance had passed. Falkland had the laugh of Cromwell. "I will take your word for it another time," said Oliver, and he added that, but for the majority of 11 votes, he would have sold up his property and emigrated to America. "So near," says Clarendon, "was the poor kingdom to its deliverance."

If there were so many Royalists in the House of Commons, there were more outside, and they were growing impatient with their King. Even Laud, in the diary he still kept in the Tower, had written that the King who let Strafford die was "a mild and gracious prince who knew not to be, or to be made, great." Suckling, before that, had told Charles that all his troubles came from lying down in the position prescribed by law, and allowing his enemies to walk over him. It is the kind of advice that every king must listen to, must occasionally follow, according to the demands of circumstance. Charles had resisted the temptation, or lost the opportunity, put it which way you will. Now he would abide by the constitution; the Commons had wrenched it out of shape for the present; time might bring a remedy.

Henrietta was indignant and impatient with her husband. She was intriguing for money from abroad, for

<sup>1</sup> This one had no foundation in reality, except a document circulated among the troops, suggesting that they should prevent and punish any one who raised mobs to overawe Parliament and endanger the life of King or Peers.



a promise of troops if actual rebellion broke out. She was still hoping for help from the Pope, though Charles refused to give any encouragement to the hope that he might secretly turn Catholic. She increased and justified the suspicions of Parliament, infinitely strengthening its position. She made the position of her fellow-Catholics terribly dangerous. Parliament had already insisted on a priest being hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn, as in the good old days when Elizabeth reigned, instead of a milk-sop with a Papist wife. How far Charles was implicated in Henrietta's foolish games it is difficult to discover. Certainly he should have found means to stop her. She was surrounded by gallant officers and rowdy bullies who did not mince matters when they spoke of "King Pym" and his colleagues. She began to wonder whether she was married to a man or a constitutional maxim.

Then came news that moved even Charles to action. Rightly or wrongly, it was reported at Whitehall that Pym and his friends had met in the City, discussed Henrietta's intrigues, and decided to impeach the Queen.

There was nothing for it but to strike first, arrest Pym and his friends, and try them for High Treason. Charles picked on Lord Mandeville, soon to become Earl of Manchester by his father's death. The choice was probably unwise and he soon concentrated on five members of the Commons—Pym, Hampden, Hazlerig, Holles, and Strode. The charges were drawn up; if they could be proved, they amounted to a treason far blacker than Strafford's. The members had conspired to subvert the Constitution by destroying regal authority and seizing "an arbitrary and tyrannical power over the lives, liberties, and estates" of Englishmen; had invited the Scots to invade England; had deliberately cast "foul aspersions" on the King in order to alienate the people's affections; had raised mobs to overawe and put pressure upon Parliament, destroying its ancient freedom.

It had long been a principle that a charge of High Treason justified any reasonable precaution against the accused and overrode lordly or parliamentary privilege. No impartial Parliament could have denied this, no Englishman would have hesitated to put it into practice against an unpopular, for instance a Popish, form of Treason. Yet when Charles ordered the sealing up of the members' private lodgings to stop the destruction of incriminating evidence, the Commons arrested his officers. They promised Charles to detain the accused men to answer their accusers (we shall see how they kept their promise), but said they must appoint a committee to debate whether their arrest would not be a breach of parliamentary privilege. One can imagine the results of such dilatory proceedings in a case like Gunpowder Treason ; and it was a civil war that was at stake. Charles decided to act. He would arrest the members himself.

Needless to say, the plan was betrayed, for no secret was safe at Whitehall. There was a fatal delay, possibly due to a lingering scruple in the King's mind, to fear of a fiasco, to mere irresolution. A morning was wasted. The members must be arrested at the afternoon session. Still Charles doubted, and Henrietta fumed. " Go, you coward," she said, " pull those rogues out by the ears or never see my face again ! " Charles went. But she had already destroyed his slender chance by telling Lucy Carlisle of the design, and Lucy had slipped a message through to Pym. A Frenchman, posted perhaps by the French ambassador, was watching in the street for Charles and his following : some three or four hundred men, army officers and others, came at his heels. The final warning reached Pym in plenty of time. The five members got into a boat and disappeared downstream to the City.

One of them, Strode, was for staying to face his trial, but he was over-persuaded. One cannot help wondering why Pym did not follow Strafford's example and rely on the justice of the Peers. There is not the slightest indication

that Charles intended anything but a strictly legal trial—indeed anything else would have been madness. We are generally told that Pym had the country on his side. He certainly had the City on his side, and mobs could probably have been got to shout for his acquittal as they had shouted for Strafford's blood. It is at least possible that Pym and his friends fled because a trial would have involved some most inconvenient revelations. It is even conceivable that they were guilty of High Treason, knew themselves guilty, and feared that the King might have sufficient evidence to prove their guilt before the House of Lords. They certainly fled.

Charles strode into the House. He told his followers to wait outside, but one of them held the door open so that the members could see the cocked pistols and naked swords. "By your leave, Mr. Speaker," said Charles to Lenthall, "I must borrow your chair a little." A glance had already told him that Pym was gone, and he could do nothing but carry off a defeat with some show of dignity. He apologized to the House for the necessity of intruding: he was careful of their privileges, but no privilege covered Treason: while there was Treason abroad, the House could never be "in the right way, that I do heartily wish it." He called the five names, but there was no answer. "I see all the birds are flown," he said. He asked for help in securing them, repeated that he contemplated nothing but a fair trial, and rose to go. Some cried "Privilege!" to his back. Some looked at the little army outside the door and expected a massacre. Charles led his followers quietly back to Whitehall, but one member ran home to make his will.

The City refused to surrender the members, and invited Skippon, a veteran from the Dutch wars, to take its trained bands in hand. Charles and Henrietta retired to Hampton Court. She said afterwards that his love had never shown so perfectly, though she confessed that it was through her and Lady Carlisle that the secret had leaked out. "Never

did he treat me for a moment with less kindness than before it happened—though I had ruined him.”

There was a weary road yet to tread before he knew himself ruined for ever. There were too many Englishmen, scattered over the country, who would not see the monarchy destroyed by manœuvres at Westminster: they would soon draw together into an army. Meanwhile the Commons struggled for control of the militia. Still Charles tried to placate them, accepted a Bill excluding Bishops from the Lords, even promised to put the militia under commanders approved by Parliament. Meanwhile he took Henrietta to Dover and sent her abroad, galloping along the cliffs until her ship faded from sight. Then he went to Newmarket to treat about the militia.

The Parliamentary list of commanders contained Harry Vane and one other commoner. The rest were the peers who had been supporters (as some said directors) of the opposition in the Commons. Essex was to control Yorkshire, the Hull arsenal, Montgomery, and Staffordshire; Lord Pembroke, two Welsh counties, Wiltshire, Hampshire, and Portsmouth; his son, three more counties in Wales; Bedford, Saye, and Brooke, a county each; Warwick, Salisbury, and Holland, two apiece. The great lords were demanding the keys of England. It was almost as if the Middle Ages had returned.

Charles met them with anger and gave the lie to their accusations. “Have I violated your Laws?” he asked, “Have I denied to pass one Bill for the ease and security of my subjects?” Pembroke begged him to grant them the militia temporarily. “By God!” said Charles, “not for an hour.”

Pembroke himself had no brain for politics, or for anything but horseflesh—James and Charles had used him mainly as a hunting companion; but his defection was serious, for he was the richest man in England. Handsome, worthless, Holland was also very wealthy: he had been Henrietta’s favourite, reaped every possible profit

from a position at Court, but was now following Warwick, his brother and fellow-shareholder in the Providence Company. He was to change sides three more times until Parliament grew tired of him and had his head off.

A still more damaging defection was that of Northumberland, a politician and an honest one. His estates had suffered from forest enlargement, but he grumblingly followed the King until the last moment. He was Admiral, and with Warwick's help brought the navy over to Parliament. The men were inclined to Puritanism, and had been vilely paid and fed: they said Parliament could not treat them worse and might treat them better. Many repented the decision and rejoined the King,—when it was too late.

Charles began to roam round England, collecting money, pleading the justice of his cause, fighting slanders. Both sides began to raise troops. In Manchester the Parliamentary agents were recruiting, when in rode Lord Strange. He saw a crowd joining the Roundheads, he told his followers to charge and disperse them. Some of the citizens were wounded, one died of his injuries a day or two later. The Civil War had begun.

While his kingdom split asunder, brother taking leave of brother to fight on different sides, Charles visited for an hour or two one little oasis of peace, where politics dwindled to a distant and evil noise.

In the year of Charles's accession, a widowed lady had bought the ruined manor of Little Gidding, in Huntingdonshire. The former owners had turned the fields to grass; the country people had vanished, but for one family in a shepherd's hut; the church was a barn. Her son, Nicholas Ferrar, who had helped in Middlesex's impeachment, came to join her and escape from a turbid and unsatisfying world. Round them formed a little community, living very austere, devoted to prayer, contemplation, and good works. They took no vows; if any member wished to marry, Little Gidding gave its blessing—but it said good-bye. They taught children from the

neighbouring town, practised and wrote music, printed, illustrated, and bound books: King Charles had been sent specimens of their work.

Naturally, they were called Papists by those who did not know them. A pamphlet begged Parliament to suppress the "Arminian Nunnery"; its cover bore a crude woodcut of Mrs. Ferrar (strongly resembling Mrs. Noah in outline) leering out of a nun's hood and dangling a Popish rosary. Such is propaganda.

Charles had visited Little Gidding before in happier times. Now he brought with him little Prince Charles and Elizabeth's son, Rupert Palatine. The Ferrars came out to meet them, kissed the King's hands, and escorted him into their church. He asked where were the Popish images he had heard so much about, where even a single cross. Ferrar had kept the place absolutely bare, to avoid gossip. "What will not malice invent?" said the King. They went to see the books, and Rupert was shown the engraved illustrations: years after he was to be the inventor of mezzotints, and one wonders if he remembered Little Gidding in his workshop. Then the young princes were given apple-pies and cheesecakes in the buttery, and they made Charles eat his share. He gave the community some money which he had won at cards. "Little Gidding is a happy place," he said, "I am glad to have seen it." The horses were brought round and the visitors mounted in the evening light. "Pray," said Charles, "pray for my speedy and safe return." Then he rode away. Next time he saw Little Gidding it was at dead of night, and he was a hunted fugitive.

On August 22, 1642, the King raised his standard in a field by Nottingham Castle. Eighty peers were to rally round it, a hundred and seventy-five of the Commons. The remainder—thirty of the Upper, three hundred of the Lower House—still sat at Westminster, still styled themselves the Parliament of England. Elections being out of the question, they co-opted new members, proclaimed the

absentees as traitors, and began to confiscate their estates. They published a manifesto, accusing Charles of prolonged misgovernment, and defending the recourse to arms as a defence against plots for the violent subversion of Parliament. The manifesto denied that Parliament could be an arbitrary power, or a breaker of law, for it represented the nobility and gentry of England, and it was "most improbable that the nobility and gentry of England should conspire to take away the law, by which they enjoy their estates, are protected from any act of violence and power, and differenced from the meaner sort of people, with whom otherwise they would be but fellow-servants." Any one who imagines that Charles was fighting democracy would do well to study these words. His offence was that he had tried to make rich and poor fellow-servants of the Crown; and he had done something to make them fellow-servants of the community.

Meanwhile, at Wellington, the King took public oath before his army that, whatever the outcome of the war, he would make no attempt to destroy the authority of Parliament or even revoke the recent legislation: he was fighting to defend monarchy from further aggression.<sup>1</sup> Both sides were recruiting the poor and calling on the gentry to bring their swords and followers to defend Liberty, Law, and Religion. Some remained neutral, or tried to. Many changed from one side to the other. Some families split for conscience' sake, some (it was whispered) in order to have a friend in both camps and save the property from confiscation. Young Evelyn came to tell the King that he was loyal but, as his estate was so near London, he could not take up arms for fear of confiscation; then he departed

<sup>1</sup> " . . . if it please God, by His blessing upon this army, raised for my necessary defence, to preserve me from this rebellion, I do solemnly and faithfully promise, in the sight of God, to maintain the just privileges and freedom of Parliament, and to govern by the known laws of the land, particularly to observe inviolably the laws consented to by me in this Parliament. When I willingly fail in these particulars I will expect no aid or relief from any man or protection from Heaven."

for foreign climes. Behind him nobler minds were making their choice.

We all know the kind of history-book which makes that choice an easy one: the frivolous and romantic, the obscurantist and the dupe became Cavaliers; Parliament secured the serious-minded, the public-spirited, all who were alive to the real issue. The truth is, as usual, a little more complicated. A choice that sundered Milton from Juxon, Montrose from Cromwell, is not made without searchings of the soul.

The religious issue was the clearest. A Royalist victory meant the triumph of the ideas embodied in an old man who lay, almost forgotten, in the Tower. It would mean a Church governed by bishops, enforcing order, beauty, and some ceremony in her worship, enjoining charity towards Catholics. The victory of Parliament seemed to mean Presbyterianism (no one foresaw that the Parliamentary army would revolt against it), bitter cruelty to the Papists, a barer, or, as some thought, a nobler form of worship. It might mean more room for spiritual strugglings, more reaching out into the unknown, perhaps a more abundant life.

Politically, all was in confusion. The ancient machinery of co-operation, of sovereignty shared by King and Parliament, had broken down. No one had a real plan for the future, each side was busy blaming the other for the breakdown. Some accused Charles, believing that he had always despised Parliament in his heart, that he had tricked and thwarted its honest intentions, filched from it its ancient powers. Others held Eliot and Hampden and Pym responsible, saw only what was self-seeking in their aims, only the slander and injustice they had used to gain them: they believed the King had tried to satisfy all their reasonable demands and found them insatiable.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Eure to Sir R. Verney, 20/6/42: "I am in such a great rage with the Parliament as nothing will pacify me, for they promised as all should be well if my Lord Strafford's head were off, and since then there is nothing better." [G. x. 213.]



Between the two views every man must judge for himself, and so long as men are men, they will differ in their judgment.

It is often assumed that the Cavaliers chose their side more by instinct, less by intelligence. It is an odd assumption to make of a party that commanded the allegiance of the Universities, and, on the whole, the majority of the best educated. It is perhaps true that a mere instinct of loyalty to the Crown was very potent, though a poor plea in disputation. When an institution is as old as monarchy and has sheltered millions through many centuries, the arguments in its favour are forgotten, the evil it does is apparent and easy to advertise. In our own day two institutions of immemorial antiquity—Marriage and Property—are in jeopardy: their power to do good has been unquestioned by the ordinary man for many centuries; yet their defenders are curiously unsatisfying. Pick up a conservative newspaper, listen to the parson or the colonel in debate: most of their arguments are futile, they are constantly overwhelmed by the citing of one "hard case"—a poor man at the mercy of employers and landlords, a woman tied for life to a drunkard or a lunatic. Yet there are still good grounds for believing (with the majority of the best brains among our ancestors) that Marriage and Property are bare necessities to the continuance of human happiness; for human salvation one must not mention nowadays, for fear of ridicule.

Instinctive or reasoned, warring convictions were soon to fill England with ruined homes, dead bodies, and weeping eyes. Some were riding to war with a sinking heart, some proud of their youth and unfleshed swords. Some dreamt of a new and better England, others only hankered for the swift decision that would send them home that winter to the petty round of dear and familiar things. Some hoped to free the King for ever from the rogues and tricksters who thwarted him in the dusty lobbies of Westminster. Some saw a mighty nation glad to be ruled by an assembly

of its best and wisest, glad to be raised in dedication to a greater God than it had known before.

If anything survived from those bright August days, it was not to be the dreams. In eighteen years the Restoration would establish most of the evil in both parties—intolerance, intrigue, the greed of self-seeking courtiers, the opportunity for Parliament-men to dip hands into the public funds. And for two centuries the rich would make laws to extend their lands, their money, and their pride over the misery of the poor. Other lusts would have a swifter satisfaction: the avarice or personal spite to which war and confiscation gave an air of legality, the madness that destroyed beauty for no reason except that it was beautiful, the blind rage against fellow-Christians who looked to Rome for salvation, the murderous hatred for the Irish race.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### TRIAL BY BATTLE

1642-45

THEY will tell you in the Highlands that there is a curse upon the house of Stewart, most active in time of war. Consider the battles: Lostwithiel, Kilsyth, Killiecrankie, Prestonpans; the victories are few and curiously fruitless. Sauchieburn, Flodden, Naseby, the Boyne, Culloden; the defeats are utterly crushing. There are reasons for everything, if we can find them. Some see a hereditary strain of indecision, entering perhaps with Darnley, perhaps earlier, not expelled until the last and best loved Stewart, Bonnie Prince Charlie, drew sword in a hopeless cause. Even so, it is better to examine the particular circumstances of each failure. The Great Rebellion is the most decisive in the history of this unhappy race.

Many things contribute to success in war—enthusiasm, numbers, military experience, money, geographical position. Enthusiasm is almost impossible for a historian to weigh. The numbers in the Civil War seemed to have started about equal, or slightly to the King's advantage. The Scottish intervention upset the balance, and from that moment the Royalists diminished, the Roundheads multiplied. The same seems to have been true of the experienced soldiers: the King began by having more veterans from Dutch and German wars, but lost the advantage when the Scots joined his enemies. It is to our national credit that these experts did not manage to introduce into England the ghastly methods of the Thirty Years' War—though this was partly due to the desire of both parties to win the support of the neutrals. Rupert's sack of Bolton was

accompanied by atrocities, Montrose's Highlanders behaved very badly in Aberdeen, and there was one horrible incident on the evening of Naseby. Far the worst thing was done after Philiphaugh by the Covenanters, when they butchered 300 women and children and, several days later, killed 50 prisoners to whom quarter had been granted, at the order of the Lords and Clergy of the Kirk. Otherwise the war was fought with unusually clean hands, until Cromwell's army disembarked in Ireland.

Money the King lacked, especially towards the end. He had many rich men on his side, particularly the Earl of Newcastle. Lord Herbert (a very interesting person who later anticipated James Watt by inventing a steam-engine) poured half a million into his war-chest in two months. Others melted their plate, diverted their rents, and mortgaged their estates for the King. Contributions were levied on occupied territory. But, with a few important exceptions, Parliament had the support of the City merchants, and, while the Navy kept the seas, London and most of the ports produced a steady revenue to support the Round-head armies. Towards the end, when both sides could recruit as many men as they could pay and feed, Parliament's greater and more lasting income was the decisive factor.

Finally, though the strategical positions were otherwise equal, Parliament had in London an almost impregnable base. There were Royalists or at least pacifists among its poor, but the City as an organization, the City controlled by merchants, shopkeepers, and apprentices, was Puritan and Parliamentary. Its offensive power was not negligible; its trained bands fought well and were once induced to march as far as Gloucester. Its defensive strength was tremendous; it was too big to be besieged, the fleet prevented its being starved out; and it would be a bold army that ventured into its labyrinth of populous streets.

Strategy was at a discount in the opening months. If London, the ports, and a few inland towns, such as Birmingham, were undoubtedly Puritan, nothing else was

certain, and the war was an affair of local feuds. The gentry skirmished with each other and tried to capture the arsenals. Trades and industries fought each other or united against agricultural districts. Town and gown struggled in Oxford and Cambridge, until Lord Saye occupied the former, Cromwell the latter, disarming the Universities and preventing them melting their plate for the King. Cromwell's occupation was permanent, and there is still a witness to it in the Elizabethan and Jacobean silver (very rare in modern Oxford) which the Cambridge Colleges kept hidden throughout the war. Meanwhile active gentlemen secured the south-eastern counties for Parliament; Devon and the West, divided at first, were won for the King by Sir Ralph Hopton's energy. Two great recruiting-grounds, Wales and the North, fell to the Royalists. Both had been under Prerogative government, both were anti-Puritan; the North followed the Earl of Newcastle. The debatable ground was to be the Midlands and the Thames valley.

Lord Essex began a larger game by a march into Worcestershire. Charles advanced into the South Midlands, between him and London. He occupied the Cotswolds, hostile country where Brooke and Saye were the principal landowners and their tenants refused food and shelter to the Royalists. Puritanism was strong; Banbury was the traditional home of the Puritan who hanged his cat for catching mice on Sunday. While the King's army lay straddled across the three roads that lead into Banbury from the north, news came that Essex was returning from Worcestershire and lay to the westward, this side of Stratford-on-Avon.

It was a Sunday morning in October. The county people were beginning their weekly rest from the immemorial war against weed and weather. Very early in the morning, the Royalists were awakened from their scattered quarters and hurried over ridge and valley towards Edge Hill.

They must have made a curious spectacle, hardly a pleasing one to the military eye. Some regiments were properly equipped with pike and musket. Some were mere crowds of men with bows, axes, and even sticks. Beside them rode gentlemen excellently mounted, some well armed, some bearing ancestral weapons unused since the Wars of the Roses or designed to slay deer and pheasants rather than men. One local squire had been found hunting in sight of the army on Saturday afternoon, and the King sent to ask whether he could not find something better to do when the kingdom was in jeopardy. He answered the call, and on Sunday night he lay dead below Edge Hill.

The place is well named. Here the broken hill country round Banbury ends in a sharp ridge whose western side is almost a cliff. Below lies the Vale of the Red Horse and the broad flat valley of Avon. It was noon before the army reached the top and looked across at Warwickshire. Its commander, Lindsey, was so tempted by the sight of that steep slope that he wanted to hold the crest as his position. If the war had been a professional one between well-supplied armies, the plan would have been excellent; Essex had been a fool not to seize the ridge before the Royalists arrived, and he could never hope to storm such a position. But the amateurs knew better than Lindsey; they wanted a battle: one battle would decide everything: the King must descend and fight Essex in the plain. They were supported by Rupert, who knew something of war. He, too, was tempted, not by the hill, but by the smooth fields below, so well adapted for his horsemen. He had trained them to charge home, not halt and fire pistols at the enemy in the old-fashioned style. Besides, to wait was to starve. There were no supplies, and some of the men had been thirty-six hours without food. Essex would gain strength; Hampden was bringing up the cannon and the reserves from Stratford. The Council of War agreed with Rupert, Lindsey threw up his command in disgust, and the

army began to scramble down the slope. The battle which would decide everything was to be fought that afternoon.

The King had a late breakfast in a cottage on the hill. With him sat Sir Edmund Verney, grizzled now, very different from the youth who had struck a priest in Madrid. He had grumbled at the war from the start; it was all about bishops, he said, and he detested bishops. But he had eaten the King's bread too long to desert him now. The King gave him the royal standard to guard. Then he called for Dr. Harvey and gave him the young princes to take care of. Harvey took them behind a hedge and lay there the whole afternoon, reading a book: he was missing a great opportunity to study the Circulation of the Blood. Charles descended the slope and rode along the ranks telling his men that at last the time was come for "swords, not words." Sir Jacob Astley was putting up the famous prayer, "Lord, Thou knowest how busie I must be this day; if I forget Thee, do not Thou forget mee."

Before them lay the many-coloured array of Parliament, better equipped with the proceeds of Hull arsenal, somewhat inferior in numbers. Essex's men were in orange (among them Stapledon's troop with Captain Cromwell), and the whole army had adopted orange scarves as a battle-sign. Brooke's men were in purple, Holles's in red, Mandeville's in blue: also in blue were the men Lord Saye had sent under his son Nat Fiennes. It was an odd mixture of new and old. Barons were revolting against the King, Puritans were fighting for a new kind of Church, City shareholders demanding a fresh system of finance. Pym and St. John, fellow-shareholders, were organizing war from London. Hampden was bringing up his own regiment of greencoats from Stratford. Behind him, under the tall spire, lay the remains of England's greatest man. It was twenty-six years since Shakespeare had died, and the England he had known was about to be blown to pieces on a Sunday afternoon between Kineton and Edge

another and fought their battle. Five thousand Englishmen lay dead or dying on the field, and nothing whatever had been decided.

Essex got home to London, the King captured Banbury and then Oxford. Saye's men had gone, the town was deprived of its arms, the Colleges became barracks and arsenals. The King pressed on to London; at Turnham Green he found Essex protecting the capital with an army twice the size of his own. There was talk of peace, but the King would grant no armistice meanwhile, and ordered Rupert to surprise Kingston. Parliament held this to be treachery, and the negotiations came to nothing. The King returned to Oxford.

Meanwhile Henrietta had returned, landing at Bridlington under the fire of Parliament's ships and risking the cannon-balls to run back and rescue a pet dog from the beach. After calling herself *She Generalissimo*, and leading troops around the Midlands, she met Charles in July 1643, near the battlefield of Edge Hill; she had just come from Stratford, where Shakespeare's daughter gave her welcome.

Her attempts to get help and money from abroad never ceased for an instant. One of her messengers was Sir Nicholas Crispe, who used to go through London disguised as a market woman; his heart lies in the church a few yards from Hammersmith Broadway. Better known is her agent abroad, Sir Kenelm Digby, who had one of the most picturesque careers of the century as a writer, duellist, privateer, scientist, and romantic lover; he was one of England's strangest products, with an outlook on life that sometimes recalls G. K. Chesterton's, sometimes Admiral Beatty's. He was famous for his collection of marbles and for a very gallant fight he had fought with some Venetian galleys in the Levant. He was now at Rome, and nearly hectoring the Pope into sending Henrietta money with no conditions attached.

Henrietta was established at Merton College, Charles in Christchurch. The university still gave lectures and



conferred degrees, but war impinged everywhere. New College cloisters and tower became a powder-magazine, the Privy Council sat at Oriel, Magdalen Grove was a parking-place for guns. The King called the Law Courts to Oxford and made New Inn Hall into a Mint. He summoned what he called his "mongrel Parliament," and his followers who had left St. Stephen's Chapel assembled in Christchurch Hall. They were always busy with petitions for overtures of peace, never with proposals for winning the war. Charles must have smiled when the Westminster Parliament replied with demands that included the punishment of the King's followers.

He was happier when he left Oxford to accompany or lead his armies on the march. The temperate habits of a lifetime made simple food and poor lodging no hardship to him; there was nothing unpleasant in having his frugal dinner in a Welsh cottage interrupted by his hostess coming to ask if the King had "finished with the cheese." Hidden in some remote corner of his complex nature was a strange interest in military things, first awakened by his brother Henry, which had made him, long ago, spend hours with manuals of war and problems of fortification. Like most men, he enjoyed the sight of well-mounted, well-equipped soldiers. Defeat found him ready to admire the bearing, if not the principles, of his enemies.

To return to Oxford was to plunge again into an atmosphere of jealousy, place-hunting, and divided counsels. The Cavaliers never forgot that they were independent gentlemen who had offered their swords and purses to the King, and unless they took a fancy to their commanders, commands were disputed and disobeyed. An amateur himself, the King could not secure unity among the professionals who were prodigal of conflicting advice. Rupert was proving the ablest soldier, both in strategy and in the training of new troops; but Rupert, active, temperate, and fearless, was not at his best in a Council of War, and

a deal too fond of "seeming with a Pish! to neglect all another said and he approved not."<sup>1</sup> The consequent troubles did not seriously affect matters until defeat and impoverishment began to work on nerves already frayed. The Royalist strategy remained for a long time a model of intelligence compared with the aimlessness of the Roundheads. For it required a Cromwell to save London's counsels from all and more of the evils that afflicted Oxford.

The armies became very different from the armed crowds of Edge Hill. Parliament, controlling the old arsenals and the Kentish factory, had the better artillery. But no one took much account of guns until it came to siegework; they decided no battles; gunners were a despised adjunct to an army, enjoying a particularly bad name for foul language—due, said some, to their commerce with infernal substances. Cavalry was very important; its function was not yet, as the Victorian officer said, "to add distinction to what would otherwise be a vulgar brawl": it was often the decisive arm. Here the King had, at first, a great advantage: his troopers were better mounted, better trained, and better led. Their only rivals came from East Anglia, where Cromwell had grasped the importance of training and was using a lighter breed of horse, the product, largely, of King James's experiments with Arab and Mediterranean strains. They proved a match for the old English "great horse,"<sup>2</sup> which the Cavaliers still favoured. It is harder to make any comparison between the infantry on the two sides. The very complicated drill survives in military handbooks: since there were no bayonets a regiment was half pikemen, half musketeers with unwieldy matchlocks, needing an iron rest to aim them, almost useless on rainy days. The handling of either weapon was an art, and one that England

<sup>1</sup> Warwick's memoirs.

<sup>2</sup> Contrariwise, the descendants of the "great horse" are now best known in East Anglia, particularly the "Suffolk punch."

had long neglected. It is not apparent that either side was quicker or better in relearning the lesson.

We have heard a great deal of the Puritan soldier, with his sturdy democratic tendencies, his occasional brutalities, his sober conduct, and the Bible in his knapsack; enough, too, of the Cavalier gentleman ruining his fortune to supply the King, glad to forget privation and the growing threat of poverty and exile in songs and ribbons and fashionable oaths. But few have had a word to say for the Royalist rank and file. They suffered as much and more as their brothers in Parliament's ranks, starved and went naked more often, whistled more often for their pay. They faced greater odds. They, too, did cruel things, and they, too, worshipped God, perhaps a God more intelligible than the Puritan Jehovah. They sweated and died unnoticed. Few rose to command, none to ease or affluence. Some returned, embittered or philosophical, to penniless homes; many were drafted into the Parliamentary armies; a few were sold as slaves in Barbadoes. History knows little of their fate. They were defeated.

There was little prospect of that defeat after the first year of war. The King's cause was in the ascendant; a strategic plan was emerging, sprung, probably, from Rupert's excellent if erratic brain. There was to be a Triple Advance on London. Sir Ralph Hopton was to push up from the west through Hampshire; Rupert himself would march along the Thames valley; Newcastle would come down the Great North Road.

The scheme was held up by the Puritan ports: there was insufficient artillery to bombard them, and "masking" them kept whole armies in idleness. Hopton left Plymouth in his rear, but had to wheel north to help in the attacks on Bristol and Gloucester. Bristol fell, but the central advance was still held up by the resistance of Gloucester. Essex decided to relieve the hard-pressed town and marched the London trained bands across the

breadth of England. He raised the siege, but his way home was blocked by the King, just south of Newbury, and a long day's battle could not clear the road. Next day, as the 'prentices prepared to renew the fight, they found the King had drawn off, his ammunition all exhausted. They got home to London with great tales to tell. Rupert, still waiting for the Advance to get under weigh, was raiding the Thames valley. Returning from one foray, he heard that Hampden was in his wake, and turned back, leapt his men over a hedge and charged across Chalgrove Field. Hampden rode from the fight with a pistol bullet in him, and reached Thame a dying man. Charles sent the parson of Chinnor to ask how he fared; there were few of his enemies for whom he would have done so much. But Hampden fared ill; after many hours of agony, he was dead. Meanwhile Cromwell was winning laurels in the east: he had met Newcastle with the left wing of the Advance, and hurled him back in Lincolnshire.

Nevertheless, London was thoroughly alarmed. The Triple Advance was stayed; it might be resumed at any moment: of defeating the King there seemed to be no prospect.

There was more talk of making peace. Even London jibbed at Pym's war-taxes: long ago a lawyer had refused to pay, gone to prison, and appealed in vain to the Petition of Right. Now Pym was finding another Parliamentary weapon to be double-edged. A deputation of Londoners, bearing a petition against any treaty that meant surrender to King Charles, was followed a day or two later by a mob shouting for peace at any price. They were mostly women. "Give us that dog, Pym!" they yelled, and they would not disperse until one had been shot down. Meanwhile Pym, said a Royalist letter, was "crawling to his grave"; an internal abscess was eating away his life. In December 1643 King Pym was buried in Westminster Abbey and lay there until the Restoration, when Charles II had his body raked out and cast into a pit.

But Pym had left behind him one legacy, the Scottish alliance, soon to be fatal to the King. The Scots had offered their army to Charles. They had no quarrel with him now; he had conceded them everything, and upon his concessions Argyle had built political power, the Presbyterians their Kirk. The price of their assistance was that Presbyterianism should be forced on England too. Charles refused, and the Scots addressed the same demand to Parliament. Pym sent young Vane north to make better terms. But bad news from the west induced Parliament to give way: the Scottish conditions were accepted, the Scots were to be paid £150,000 a month, and England was to be made a Presbyterian country.

At Oxford, Montrose was begging for leave to go and raise the Scottish Royalists before Argyle was ready with his army. It seemed a hopeless venture, for no one knew that Montrose could work miracles. Charles had begun to rely again on Hamilton, who had repented of his double-dealing and was soon to die for the King. Hamilton had always disliked Montrose, and could point out that Montrose had once been in arms for the Covenant. Charles had little eye for men, never knew whom he could trust, and certainly could not recognize the presence of a genius. The fatal decision to do nothing was taken, Argyle went to work unimpeded, and in the bitter January of 1643 a "little old crooked man," now the Earl of Leven, crossed the Tweed a second time, with 20,000 Covenanters at his heels.

Rupert had just taken Newark in the Midlands. He hastened north to meet the Scots, making a detour through divided Lancashire. Cromwell had joined Leven, and they were besieging Newcastle's army in the city of York. Rupert released Newcastle from the besiegers, and the united armies fell upon each other on the lonely moor outside Long Marston. For the first and last time Rupert's charge was broken, though Cromwell was wounded in the fight. As the long day closed, the Royalist cavalry had

been driven from the field, and Newcastle's whitecoats, surrounded and past all hope, died grimly fighting in the twilight. The North was lost for ever.

Events in Cornwall temporarily restored the balance upset on Marston Moor. Essex was blundering westward with the best Parliamentary army. Before him fled Henrietta, separated from her husband for the last time: at Exeter she gave birth to little Minette, who would never see her father. Then, in great pain, she arrived at Falmouth, and escaped to Brest, fired on by a Parliamentary ship. Meanwhile Essex was walking straight into a trap laid for him at Lostwithiel, some said by King Charles himself, some by a deaf old Scot of the Ruthven family, knighted by King Gustavus, made Earl of Brentford by King Charles. It was his last fight, for Charles dismissed him; no one knows quite what had happened, but the dismissal caused new quarrels among the Cavaliers.

Parliament's remedy for its similar evils was a committee of generals, with two civilian members in whose absence no decision might be taken. The result was the second battle of Newbury: Charles raised the siege of Donnington Castle outside the town and escaped, with little loss, from an army that hemmed him round with nearly double his numbers: Cromwell's successful attack on his rear was rendered useless by the sloth or treachery of Manchester.

Meanwhile Essex, escaping by sea from Lostwithiel, had come to London to find a pretty kettle of fish. Parliament was renewing its offers to the King, but demanding Presbyterianism, control of the army and navy, and punishment of the Royalist leaders. Charles replied they would have "much ado" before he gave up his Church, his Crown, and his friends. Manchester was for reducing the terms and making peace. He and Essex talked of impeaching Cromwell, who determined to make no terms with King Charles. Cromwell carried Parliament against the Lords, and there was no treaty.

The only impeachment was an ancient one, now carried to its horrible close against Archbishop Laud. Laud had stood aside at Prynne's trial, though it was only a matter of form. But it was no matter of form that Prynne was given the task of collecting evidence against his old enemy, ransacking his rooms, and producing his private diary—with certain inconvenient passages burnt away. Prynne found a Missal among Laud's books, and used it to substantiate a charge of Popery. Laud replied that he had spent much time refuting Popery and actually converting Papists, and had used the Missal for that purpose; he asked whether a Koran he had always kept was evidence of Mohammedanism. Laud complained that his judges stayed in Court to hear the prosecution's evidence and strolled out when he began his defence. Even so, the Peers jibbed at the business, led by Essex. The Commons dropped impeachment and substituted Attainder. They were backed by petitions from the City. It was a cruel parody of Strafford's case.

Parliament had had good grounds for representing Strafford as a danger. Laud was a harmless old man who had been in prison for four years, occupied largely with charitable schemes;<sup>1</sup> he was powerless to help the King, except with his prayers, it had always been his principle that life must not be taken for conscience' sake. But Parliament had passed the Attainder, and he was led to the scaffold, Clotworthy harassing him with foolish questions, until he turned to the executioner for relief. He knelt to pray for peace in England, for "brotherly love and charity." "Lord," he said, "I am coming as fast as I can." His head was struck off. He had been long in coming, for he was over seventy years of age.

One is glad to know that there were great crowds of Londoners to see him buried, and some brave enough to defy Parliament by reading the forbidden Prayer Book.

<sup>1</sup> Reading still administers money that he left for apprenticing young men and providing dowries for poor girls.

service at the grave. It is also interesting to hear that one Abbot in Rome was glad to learn of Laud's death, because "the greatest enemy of the Church of Rome in England was cut off."

The murder of an old man could hardly help Parliament to defeat the King. The present methods were doing little to accomplish that object, and London felt that all its successes were being put into "a bag with holes." Cromwell had shown what new methods could accomplish: there was plenty of money to raise and train proper and permanent forces: in the winter of 1644-45 Parliament voted the formation of the New Model Army. To stop jealousies, the "Self-Denying Ordinance" excluded all Parliament men from military command. It was soon relaxed in Cromwell's favour, while it excluded Manchester; but Cromwell had no hand in the training of the New Model. Fairfax and Skippon adopted his ideas and copied the East Anglian troops. The men were splendidly clad and equipped: for the first time an English army appeared wholly in scarlet. The training ground was Windsor Park; here, under the windows of Charles's castle, the redcoats wheeled and manœuvred, learnt to handle pike and musket. Among them, perhaps, were the units that Charles II would take over, and christen the Coldstream Guards. Parliament had achieved a standing army.

It was to prove the ultimate threat. Charles had neither men nor money to meet it. Oxford was still in love with traditions and personal loyalties, still hampered by intrigue and jealousy. It could not defend itself against the business men of London, now that they were learning to make war in a businesslike way.

And then, for one glorious moment, the sanguine Charles must have thought that the whole structure of rebellion was about to fall to pieces. Its foundation was the Scottish army that had beaten Rupert at Marston Moor. Northern England was only kept from returning to its loyalty by the concentrated power of the Scottish Lowlands.



But there are hills beyond Pentland and streams beyond Forth. Scotland would not be Scotland if it were only the Lowland plains and hills across which Saxon and Norman have spread their blood and their civilization. Beyond them rose the mountains, sheltering an older and a darker race; it peopled in great numbers the valleys that have now become lonely playgrounds for the rich. The soil was poor, the living hard; the Highlanders could eke it out by plundering Lowland neighbours, who spoke of them as mere savages, though they had an older culture and language, shared with their Irish kinsmen. The Middle Ages had passed over their heads, leaving their tribal law untainted by feudalism, turning gangs of robbers into well-knit clans. Many had ignored the Reformation, and the chieftains kept their own priests, even sent their sons to Catholic schools on the Continent. All hated Clan Campbell, and had old feuds with Archie Campbell, who called himself Argyle and had thrown in his lot with Lowlanders and Kirk Elders. They had refused the Covenant and suffered terribly from Argyle's cruel raids. They cared nothing for Parliaments and legality, mere machinery for hanging their best champions as thieves in the Edinburgh Grassmarket. Now Montrose had at last obtained a royal commission; he was coming to raise the Highlanders for the cause of a king who had defied Parliaments, favoured Catholics, and was himself a Highland Stewart. If it was centuries since his ancestors had turned their backs upon the mountains, centuries were nothing to the men who remembered Cuchulain and Deirdre in their songs. They made a strange army, ill-clad, barefooted, without a commissariat. But they moved at a pace which made the daily march of trained troops a laughing-stock. And even trained troops found it difficult to stand against their charge.

The thing started in the oddest way. A small band of Irish royalists landed on the west coast and attacked the Covenanting Campbells. They were soon head over heels in a muddle of clan feuds, thoroughly unpopular with

every one ; they were chevied across to Blair Atholl, and there Montrose promised to meet them. They expected him to come with drum and trumpet, and a respectable army ; all that arrived was a travel-stained laird in a blue bonnet, with one companion at his heels. But his name was sufficient to rouse the Stewarts and Robertsons, who brought a few claymores and pikes, many sticks and knives ; the Irish had muskets and one round of ammunition apiece ; there were two lean horses in the army. Three thousand strong, it marched to Tippermuir one Sunday morning and encountered six thousand Covenanting infantry, seven hundred horse, and any number of Presbyterian preachers. In a few minutes the Highlanders had them all on the run ; by the evening they had killed two thousand, captured Perth, and begun to requisition cloth to cover their half-naked limbs.

Another defeat and the cruel sack of Aberdeen brought Argyle out from Edinburgh. He was no soldier, but his intrigues detached from Montrose some of the Lowland lairds that had begun to join him. Their place was supplied by Macdonalds and Macleans, Farquarsons and Camerons. Montrose struck westward at the almost impregnable strongholds of Clan Campbell, descending from wintry moorlands to plunder the shores of Loch Awe. Argyle, hurrying across from the east, hurried away again in a fishing-boat ; but he summoned an army of 3000 from the south, 5000 from the east. Montrose had 1500 left ; he avoided one enemy by a desperate mountain march, destroyed the other at the great battle of Inverlochy. A month later he had marched right round Scotland and captured Dundee. Driven north, he beat an army nearly twice the size of his own at Auldearn, another, more equally matched, at Alford, another at Kilsyth. Edinburgh sent submission, explaining its disloyalty as due to the machinations of a few traitors. Glasgow opened its gates, and Montrose held a Parliament, proclaiming religious tolerance and the end of Presbyterian tyranny. Then he turned

south to help King Charles in England. The blue bonnets were coming over the Border.

They never reached it. The thing ended as suddenly as it had begun. After each battle, Montrose had found his Highlanders disappear to store their booty in safety or settle private feuds. Few would think of accompanying him to England. The Lowlanders were alienated by his alliance with thieves and Papists, and the few who came with him were half-hearted; only the Irish remained reliable. Some of Leven's men had come home from England, not enough to loosen Parliament's grip on the northern counties, enough to catch Montrose napping in a Border mist near Philiphaugh and obliterate his army with terrible cruelties. Scotland was lost at a blow.

The year's campaign remains as one of the greatest feats of arms in human history. Montrose had tackled every military problem from the pitched battle fought with infantry, cavalry, and guns, to the superhuman task of getting thousands of drunken pillagers out of a town menaced by vastly superior numbers. No one can say what might have happened if King Charles could have employed him earlier, and in England.

During the next hundred years the clans were to rise many times for the Stewart cause. Their last and greatest effort would carry them to Derby and so frighten the English gentry that an Act of Parliament proscribed the Highland language, dress, and weapons. Such chiefs as had not been blown to pieces at Culloden were persuaded into becoming landlords in virtue of a law of property that had never run in the Highlands. Eviction turned populous glens into silent deer-forest, and drove the descendants of Montrose's clansmen across the Atlantic to the farms, the shops, and the criminal gangs of nineteenth-century America.

Their first venture had done Charles little good. Before Philiphaugh was fought and lost, another disaster had crushed his rising hopes.

Fairfax and Skippon had marched the New Model away from Windsor. Orders from London, still hesitating and contradictory, sent them into Somerset, brought them back to lay fruitless siege to Oxford. Then they were told to raise the siege and pursue King Charles, marching northward to join Montrose. Charles had fallen upon Leicester, captured and plundered the town; then he turned back to meet the New Model Army.

In the very centre of England, the gentle undulations of the Midlands suddenly decide to reach a respectable height. A few miles south of Market Harborough lies a small steep hill: the homestead on its summit is called, in English fashion, Low Farm. It looks, southward again, across two smaller ridges, Dust Hill and Mill Hill, to a rather larger mass reaching 600 feet above sea-level. The district was once controlled by the monastery of Sulby Abbey: now the only important building is a fine gentleman's residence called Sulby Hall. The countryside is typically Midland, mournful in winter, very pretty in summer. It was June when the English monarchy was destroyed between those two hills. In some early age Danish settlers had christened the village beside Low Farm with the name of Sibbertoft; another, hidden behind the crest of the larger, more southern hill, they called Naseby.

It was early in the morning when Charles and Rupert left Market Harborough and began to climb up to Sibbertoft. News had come that some soldiers of the New Model had arrived in Naseby last night. Rupert had always spoken slightly of the New Model; the event did something to justify him; but nothing could justify giving battle to it on disadvantageous ground with little more than half its numbers. Probably Rupert had no such intention. His scout reported that there was no large body of the enemy within striking distance. The man may have been a traitor; more likely he had found Sibbertoft Hill, Dust Hill, and Mill Hill sufficient for his morning's

journey, and had not troubled to climb the last slope and look down into Naseby village. Nor could Rupert know that two nights ago the New Model had cheered Oliver Cromwell into their camp with his East Anglian troopers.

Fairfax was also unprepared for a battle, and his army was still in disorder as it came over the rise from Naseby and spread itself along the slope of Mill Hill. Cromwell made a virtue of necessity, telling his men that the Lord delighted to protect his unprepared host against the premeditated assault of the wicked: he might have added that, other things being equal, the Lord generally protects fourteen thousand men against the attack of eight thousand.

Rupert had ridden ahead, clad in a red *montero*, or general's cloak. He suddenly saw a Parliamentary army spread out before him and hastened back to form his battle-line. He took the right wing. Opposite him the Parliamentary cavalry was led by Ireton, soon to be Cromwell's son-in-law, for whom Cromwell had begged the command. Colonel Okey had advanced his dragoons (mounted infantry we might call them) to man a hedge in front of and at right angles to the battle-line: he hoped to gall the flank of Rupert's charge.

The two wings trotted towards each other. Suddenly Rupert halted, and the puzzled Ireton halted too. Rupert resumed the charge, smashed Ireton's regiments to pieces, captured their commander and raced off to chase the fugitives. As he galloped, he could see that the infantry in the centre had come to blows and that the Royalists were thrusting back the red coats: the New Model was not quitting itself well. In a short time Rupert was up and over Mill Hill, up the stiffer slope to Naseby. The Parliament's baggage guard saw him coming and thought it was Fairfax in flight, for Fairfax also wore a red *montero*. But when they heard Rupert's voice summoning them to surrender, they answered with a volley. He turned to

collect his scattered men : it would take a long time to bring them back to the decisive point.<sup>1</sup>

Fairfax was not in flight : indeed, that very brave gentleman could never be persuaded to remain at his post as general when a post of danger offered. He was in among the infantry, hard pressed by the King's centre. Skippon was down with a wound. Fairfax had lost his steel-cap, and was fighting bareheaded among the pikes.

It was Cromwell who saved the battle. He commanded the cavalry on the right wing. The ground here was rough and pitted with rabbit-holes. (There are still rabbits on Naseby field, descendants perhaps of the seventeenth-century conies who told their children to lie still while foolish humans made "such dreadful pother" overhead.) Across the warren rode Cromwell, hurling back Langdale's horsemen to where Charles waited on Dust Hill. Instead of pursuing, Cromwell wheeled inward to help the hard-pressed infantry in the centre, and caught the Royalists on flank and rear. Fairfax's men took new heart, Ireton was recaptured. One by one the Royalist regiments were broken. When Rupert galloped back, only one still held its place, fighting, says a Puritan soldier, "with incredible resolution." Round behind them swept Rupert to find King Charles and urge him to fly. Charles was desperately trying to lead a last attack. They would not let him. "Will you go to your death?" they said, seized his bridle, and led his horse away. The battle was over, the King's army fled.

Everything was captured—flags, guns, baggage, even the King's private letters. The Puritans reached Sibbertoft in no melting mood. They had heard stories of the plunder of Leicester, of a Welsh colonel called Thomas recruiting for the King by slashing at objectors' legs with his sword. Thomas lay dead on Naseby field, and a good

<sup>1</sup> By taking Edgehill and Naseby as typical battles, I have been unfair to Rupert. In both he seems to have made a similar and disastrous mistake. There is no other instance of it in his other battles.

riddance. But in the King's camp were a hundred women, some Irish and Papist harlots, some respectable soldiers' wives. Next morning the Irishwomen were all dead, the English horribly gashed about the face.

London was overjoyed at the victory. The king's letters were published, and great capital made of his attempts to get help from Ireland, France, and the Pope. Cromwell's dispatch, after describing the battle, demanded fair treatment for the men who had won it, especially (since all manner of sects flourished in the New Model) liberty of conscience and freedom from Presbyterian tyranny. But men in London were talking of religious toleration as the Devil's engine, and the Commons deleted this part of the dispatch before sending it to the printer. Their censorship was comically ineffectual, for the Lords were simultaneously ordering the dispatch to be published in full.

It was all over with the Royalist cause. Naseby was followed by Langport and the loss of Goring's army. Some hope was built on the resistance of Bristol: Rupert wrote that he could hold it for four months while new armies were organized. On the heels of his letter came the news that he had surrendered the city with hardly a fight. Charles believed that even Rupert was turning traitor, and dismissed him from command. Meanwhile Puritan armies were closing round Oxford, and Cromwell trundled great guns through Hampshire, smoking out the Royalist strongholds. His last task was Basing House, where the Catholic Marquis of Winchester had often entertained Henrietta and her friends in the happier times of peace. Basing had beaten off three fierce assaults of Waller, fought starvation and the small-pox, and endured later sieges, replying with bold sallies in the night. It bid defiance even to Cromwell's guns: *Aimez Loyalte* was Basing's motto. Three days the cannon thundered on the fourth, in the cold October dawn, Cromwell's soldiers carried the breaches by assault. There was a

terrible carnage, for the garrison had refused quarter. Six priests were found and killed, four reserved for a crueller death upon the scaffold. Among those saved was Wencelas Hollar the artist and an old man, carried out in a blanket, who had once been the great Inigo Jones. The Marquis himself survived—to be ill-rewarded at the Restoration. Now Peters the preacher harried him with foolish questions: Why had he maintained the defence in such a hopeless cause? “Basing is called Loyalty,” said the Marquis.

As their cause grew more desperate, the dissensions among the Cavaliers grew worse rather than better. Rupert returned to headquarters, was absolved from the charge of treachery, but remained a focus for intrigues and quarrels until he left the country in despair.

Parliament’s armies closed in upon Oxford. Fairfax camped on Headington Hill: Skippon, recovered from his wound, joined him there: Rainsborough captured Woodstock. On May 11, 1646, the city surrendered to its besiegers.

A fortnight earlier the King had slipped across Magdalen Bridge before daybreak, disguised as a servant; his “master” was John Ashburnham; with them went a clergyman called Michael Hudson. They rode towards London, across twenty miles of plain and up the steep slope of the Chilterns. At Nettlebed a soldier of Ireton’s army insisted on joining the party. Charles told him that his master was a member of Parliament, then (as the man grew suspicious at a large tip handed to an innkeeper) a member of the Lords. Through Bix and Henley they rode: at Slough they shook off their unwelcome companion. It is thought that they expected a message from supporters in London, and Parliament, having heard of the escape, was prodigal of orders to stop the King coming. But at Harrow the party struck north. Charles had long been in communication with the Scots, and they had promised him shelter, perhaps armed support against their allies. From Harrow he rode to Downham, then, at



dead of night, to Little Gidding, up a slope still called "The King's Close." There was no shelter here, for it was Puritan country and the Ferrars were watched by many jealous eyes. John Ferrar led the King to Coppingfold in the night. Three days later Charles rode into Southwell, dismounted at the "King's Arms" and ordered a meal. It was his last in freedom. The Commissioners came to escort him to the Scottish camp.

Far away, at Stow-on-the-Wold, his last army had surrendered to Parliament. Its commander was Astley, who had prayed so well at Edge Hill. "Gentlemen," he said to his captors, "you have done your work and may now go to play—unless you prefer to fall out among yourselves."

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### THE PRISONER

1645-48

It needed no hint from Astley to make it clear that England was only at the beginning of her troubles. Since the war had grown out of mutual suspicions rather than a definite clash of principle, the victors had no agreed plan for a settlement. Still suspecting the King, they had begun to suspect one another. Mutual differences had been sunk for purposes of war: victory merely served to show that they were irreconcilable.

The Scots had lent a hand in return for two things—a promise of money and a promise that England should be made a Presbyterian country. Parliament had not paid them more than a fraction of their money, and was dilatory in its attempts to force Presbyterianism on a reluctant England. Cheated of their bargain, the Scots were beginning to suffer from a guilty conscience; they were even asking themselves why they were in arms against a King who, reluctantly or no, had granted Scotland everything it had demanded of him. Short of money, they were making themselves unpopular by living at free quarters on the northern shires. Meanwhile they watched with apprehension the growth of England's military power and wondered how soon it would be directed to the conquest or plunder of Scotland.

Parliament, the ostensible victor in the war, was quite incompetent to use its victory. The best of the Parliamentarians were dead; Essex had followed Pym and Hampden into the grave. The remainder were distracted in counsel and unpopular with the country. They had

been raising great sums of money by the ordinary taxation and by the newly invented Excise: they were ruining great numbers of the Cavaliers by confiscating their estates altogether; those who asked to buy them back by "compounding" with a proportion of their value were told they must first sign the hated Covenant; and while many of the old clergy were expelled from their parishes and left to beggary or a tiny pension, Parliament had control of the great revenues of the bishoprics. As Parliament had ceased to keep any accounts, no one knew what was happening to the money. But it was common knowledge that members were growing rich on the bribery connected with the system of compounding, and that they had long been voting each other money as compensation for "sufferings" in the Parliamentary cause and for private money spent on the war. Meanwhile it was not only the Scots that remained unpaid; the wages of Parliament's own army were months in arrears. Unpopular because of high taxation, suspected of very serious corruption, Parliament was proposing to force upon England a Presbyterian Church for which there was little enthusiasm and a great deal of violent opposition throughout the country.

That opposition was strongest in Parliament's own army, where there was an effective demand for religious toleration. It is only reasonable to assume that the majority of the soldiers would have been glad to disband and go home. But it was folly to expect they would do so while their pay was still denied them and their masters in Parliament were passing laws to bind their consciences, and even their daily habits, in bonds far narrower than any that Laud had forged. Parliament had only itself to blame when the troops refused to disperse unpaid, or be shipped to Ireland for further campaigns. The soldiers began to elect committees and "agitators" (agents, we should call them) to enforce their political demands. Each regiment turned itself into a debating society and discussed the most exalted interpretations of Christianity side by

side with the wildest religious fads. They attacked Parliament's claim to represent England, and evolved democratic and even socialistic principles very interesting to a later age, very repugnant to the mind of seventeenth-century England.

Finally, there was the undoubted fact that the bulk of Englishmen, so far as they thought of politics at all, could only think in terms of hereditary monarchy. The clergy and Cavaliers, defeated and despoiled, were still unrepentant Royalists; the majority of the Roundheads thought that the only problem was to frame restrictions on the King's powers, and were continually irritated by their leaders' failure to find a solution.

At first sight it might seem that Charles might be able to fish in such troubled waters with a fair hope of success. An adroit and unscrupulous man might soon have found himself in a stronger position than he was before the war. Charles was not very adroit; he had some scruples, few, but quite unconquerable. He had, besides, two very serious disadvantages. He was more or less a prisoner, relying on such reports as his captors allowed to reach him, or on messages smuggled to him by secret agents. Rightly believing that most of England wanted a monarchy, he greatly overestimated the numbers and energy of those who would work actively for its preservation. Cut off from reliable information, he remained as sanguine as ever. In his whole life he had hardly known what it was to have the luck upon his side, to reap the full reward of a good move or avoid the bitterest consequences of an error. But he remained obstinately certain that the luck must one day turn. Only when the imminence of death convinced him that all was over, did he show the true courage founded, not on false hopes, but on despair of everything this world can offer.

There is also a darker side to the picture. He had always been a bad judge of men, not knowing whom to trust and whom to suspect. In the discreditable years

that followed civil war, he came to the conclusion that he could trust no one, certainly no one who had once been in arms against him. He thought merely of playing off one man against another, using only their baser instincts, utterly ignoring their ideals. He would not actually break his word to them, or set his name to conditions he could not fulfil: short of that anything was justifiable to hoodwink a set of rebels whose schemes for a peaceful settlement of the country they had disturbed seemed to him the merest moonshine. The fact that he was invariably patient and courteous towards them, conquered them again and again by his personal charm, merely served to convince them, when the spell was shaken off, that they were dealing with a slippery rascal.

It must be allowed that his adversaries were not over-scrupulous towards him or towards each other. Charles's first move, the flight to the Scottish camp, had plunged him into the midst of a very dubious game.

Richelieu was dead; his successor, Mazarin, had dispatched an envoy, Montreuil, nominally to mediate between the contending parties, but with secret instructions to make sure that the result of his mediation was neither a strong monarchy nor a strong republic in England. At Montreuil's suggestion, the Scots had invited Charles to join them, behind the back of their allies in London. They promised to secure him "in conscience and honour" and restore him to "his rights and prerogatives," but they refused to put their pledge in writing. Charles promised to content them as far as possible in religion, and was willing to "receive instruction" about Presbyterianism. He had no intention of being converted, but not unnaturally the Scots took this as an indication that he intended to change his faith in order to regain his Crown. The game of deception had begun.

As soon as the Scots had possession of his person, they marched off to Newcastle and attempted to persuade him of the truth and necessity of Presbyterianism. Alexander

Henderson, original champion of the Covenant, was brought from Scotland to argue with His Majesty. Charles was at his best in theological controversy, and Henderson went home to Edinburgh to die without having made the least impression. Persistent rumours represented Henderson as not only converted, but repentant for all that he had done; a death-bed confession was published, in which Henderson lauds Charles to the skies and wishes Scotland had been guided by his wisdom from the first. It is, in all probability, a Royalist forgery.

But others seem to have feared the power of the King's persuasive tongue. Parliament refused his offer to come to London and discuss the terms of settlement. They sent a deputation to Newcastle with a set of conditions which the King must accept or reject as a whole. Charles asked why so many dignitaries were sent to present the terms when "an honest trumpeter could have done the business." The demands included Presbyterianism, Parliamentary control of army and navy, the punishment of prominent Royalists. Charles could not possibly accept them as they stood. The most he would do for the Presbyterians was to let them have their way for three years and then call a general conference to re-settle religion. In three years' time he did not doubt that he would be able to re-establish Episcopacy. Henrietta wrote to him from France suggesting that he should accept Presbyterianism, and bargain for military control in return: she could see no difference between one Protestant heresy and another, but an army was an army. The poet Davenant arrived in Newcastle to back her arguments, and talked as though forms of religion did not matter. Charles dismissed him in anger; he had lost his kingdom, but he would not regain it at the price of the Church. He believed that his Coronation oath bound him to uphold bishops; he was sure that to sanction Presbyterianism was to hand over the spiritual guidance of England to everything that he considered evil. He was living in a different world from Davenant's, and

one in which material advantages cannot be purchased by spiritual surrender. Later ages blessed Charles for his unshakable resolve, preserved through two years of tempting offers, preserved finally under the threat of death; the Church of England made him its martyr. It is difficult to feel enthusiastic about the diplomatic methods whereby the resolve was defended, but, if the history of succeeding centuries is any guide, Charles was certainly defending the settled purpose of England against a minority of doctrinaires.

The Scots, finding that he was no use as an instrument for attaining their religious ends, began to think about the other side of their bargain. Parliament was ready to grant them a good proportion of their money, and after some haggling, they agreed to give up the King and return home. It was unfortunate for their reputation that the money arrived in Newcastle on the very day that Charles was handed over to the Parliamentary commissioners; their already uneasy consciences were not quieted by the taunts that they had sold their King. Some of the townsmen of Newcastle flung stones and shouted "Judas!" at the retreating columns, as they wound out of the town towards the Border.

Charles was brought southward to Holmby House, in Northamptonshire, for Parliament still feared his presence and influence in London. The journey served to fortify his conviction that England was Royalist at heart. People crowded to welcome him on the road, the gentry escorted him on his way, everywhere there were shouts of "God bless Your Majesty!"

His new masters denied his chaplains access, and sent him Presbyterian divines; Charles shut himself up in his bedroom and read over the Prayer Book service in solitude. They even passed a resolution that his Communion plate should be melted down and made into a dinner service for him. In other respects he was not badly treated, and much deference was shown him. He was always person-

and considerate, winning the regard, and in some cases the loyalty, of the servants whom Parliament sent to attend him. He read much—theology, poetry, and Shakespeare's plays.<sup>1</sup> He played cards and chess, and, since there was no bowling-green at Holmby, was allowed to ride over to Althorpe for a game.

He was willing to entertain any proposal submitted to him, but he still evaded the definite answer, delaying, arguing, raising false hopes. It was an exasperating game for his opponents. He simply disbelieved in the sincerity of the men who came to bargain with him, and was perfectly sure that they could not lay the foundations for a lasting peace. The only thing that mattered was to gain time, for time would make England speak with a clear voice and demand to be ruled by her King, not by a corrupt clique of Parliamentary politicians. Perhaps the most exasperating thing of all was that the King was probably right. He was waiting for the Restoration, and, by any ordinary calculation, the Restoration might have come any time within the next few years. What upset ordinary calculation and delayed the thing for fifteen, was a phenomenon that King Charles could hardly appreciate. It was the genius of Cromwell.

It is hardly possible to be just to this very remarkable man within the limits of a biography of King Charles. His greatness, outside the military sphere, is not yet apparent; the most questionable part of his life is under review. Anathema to the Royalists, he would soon be detested by the majority of his Roundhead colleagues. For more than a century after his death, he was generally regarded as an unscrupulous and hypocritical adventurer, and the evidence for this view was collected mainly from

<sup>1</sup> "The constant companion of these his solitudes," says *Eikonoklastes*. The source is suspect, as the book accuses him, in earlier days, of indecent behaviour with women in the theatre, and hints at parricide and sodomy. Such are the methods of seventeenth-century controversy, yet one is sorry to see them under the name of John Milton.



the years that led up to King Charles's death. More recently he has become a popular hero; the new legend, probably far nearer the truth, is based principally on later achievements.

The case against him is easily stated. He joined the party which denounced King Charles for ruling without Parliament, levying taxes of doubtful legality, punishing the opposition of individuals in arbitrary courts of law, and dictating a certain form of religion to England. He used his party's triumph to make himself a king in all but name. He then destroyed Parliament and put nothing in its place to check his own despotism. He raised taxes of unheard-of proportions without the consent of the taxed; he arrested and imprisoned men by arbitrary power; he proscribed the religion that had been, and was again to be, that of the majority of Englishmen. He altered laws and interfered with the life and liberty of the ordinary Englishman as no Stewart ever dared to do. His power was based on the force of armies, which overawed England, conquered the Scots, and behaved in Ireland as no body of Christians can behave without defying every precept of religion and common decency. Military strength and a large revenue enabled him to win a prestige for England which, to some Englishmen, justifies all Cromwell's career. It was used to enforce a barren and unintelligent foreign policy; for my Lord Protector retained much of the ignorance and prejudice of a petty Huntingdon squire.

So much must be granted of his political career. The man himself can be represented in an almost more unfavourable light. When the tide of opinion began to turn in his favour, nearly a century ago, Carlyle lent it strength by republishing, with comments, the surviving letters and speeches. We are out of tune with Carlyle to-day, for we resent being shouted at. Sandwiched between slices of Victorian rhetoric, Cromwell's own words strike rather chill. There are bursts of real eloquence, and a great deal of sound sense. But the level of intelligence is not a very

high one: there is little consistent thinking or grasp of principle; a few speeches read like the wanderings of a disordered mind. Behind all is the assumption, far more irritating than the Divine Right of Kings, that God is always on Cromwell's side, and on the side of whatever party Cromwell happens to be supporting. Victory is a proof of it; whether over Royalist or Dutchman or Spaniard; a nasty little defeat in the West Indies is no disproof. There is no arguing with such a mind, except by steel and lead; and when steel and lead are in play, this man had a trick of winning the argument. The secret of his greatness is not yet apparent.

It will always remain hidden from those who think too precisely. It does not lie in intellect: intellectually Cromwell is below Strafford and even Buckingham. It lies in instinct and energy, and in that English quality for which we have coined the untranslatable phrase of Common Sense. His brain could not follow the arguments of trained lawyers, and, from mere impatience, he said that English law was a "godless jumble"; but he was obviously right. And when instinct prompted him to say that it was wicked to hang a man for stealing six-and-eightpence, it is useless for a lawyer to put in a demurrer or cite a precedent.

A man cannot be the first soldier of his day without some great qualities. If he applies them to politics, he may be unscrupulous and do much incidental harm, but something of enduring importance is likely to result. Cromwell made two contributions to the Puritan cause, beside making all the difference between its success and failure in the field of battle. He could not make it tolerant, but he checked and modified its intolerance. He saved England from the rigid Presbyterians, and gave freedom to everything except the Mass and the Book of Common Prayer. Secondly, he had something of Strafford's hatred of "particular interests" and Strafford's love of good government. He rescued his party from the

domination of rich aristocrats, pushing Essex and Manchester aside, driving Saye into obscurity. His task was easier than Strafford's in that he had an army to support him, and a vastly greater revenue (for he had no hesitation in raising heavy taxation and, even then, in leaving huge debts behind him). But he insisted on a strong central power, and he used it to govern efficiently in what he took to be the interests of the whole nation.

It might be imagined that, politically if not personally, Cromwell had a good deal in common with King Charles. An alliance between the two may not appear unthinkable, and, for a moment, it looked as though that alliance would come about. Two things made it unreal and ephemeral: Charles represented legitimacy and continuity. If Cromwell's capacity to rule justified his seizure of power, then England would be for ever at the mercy of adventurers who imagined themselves to have a similar genius. Rebellion would follow rebellion, and of ultimate stability there was no hope. The legitimist argument was indeed justified by the collapse and anarchy that followed Cromwell's death. Secondly, the personal factor was all important: Charles and Cromwell were impossible allies. There was a certain lack of continuity in Cromwell's nature as in his politics—a constant friction between the temperament of an English country gentleman and the alien, excitable religion that alternately comforted and tormented him.<sup>1</sup> By middle age he had partially conquered his difficulties. But he was given to the kind of horse-play that suggests nervous repressions: he did many of his most famous actions in fits of irritable temper. The

<sup>1</sup> He was Welsh by extraction, his real name being Williams. His great-grandfather adopted the grander name of Cromwell from a brother-in-law, the famous Thomas Cromwell, plunderer of the monasteries. Oliver's mother, Elizabeth Steward, came of another family connected with monastic lands. But the theory which attributes his religious and politics primarily to such origins breaks down at a vital point. Oliver was a cadet of the family; the chief monastic spoils went to his uncle and namesake, Sir Oliver of Hinchinbrook, who remained a Churchman and Royalist to his death.

story that, as he signed the King's death-warrant, he playfully smeared ink on his colleague's face is not evidence of levity ; it may be indication of a fevered mind, at war with itself.

Such a temperament, dynamic, fraught with good and evil in undigested confusion, was entirely outside the range of King Charles's sympathies, which demanded self-possession and good taste as mere preliminaries to co-operation. The two complex personalities were about to come into unprofitable contact.

One day, as Charles was playing bowls at Althorpe, his guardians suddenly interrupted him with the news that a large troop of horses was in the neighbourhood. The game was stopped, the party hurried back to Holmby. Late that night the King was awakened by the sound of angry voices in the passage and a heavy knocking on the door. It opened to reveal a young subaltern with a stupid face,<sup>1</sup> holding a loaded pistol. Joyce was his name ; he would not say who had sent him, but he had come to fetch His Majesty away from the hands of Parliament's commissioners. The King told him to wait till morning. He rose early and summoned Joyce, asking by what authority he was acting and where was his commission. Joyce pointed out of window to a troop of cavalry drawn up before the house. " It is as fair a commission," said Charles, " and as well written as I have seen a commission written in my life," and he proceeded to compliment Joyce on the appearance of his men. At his own suggestion, Joyce took him to Newmarket, and it soon became clear who was Joyce's master. When Fairfax and Cromwell met the King, both denied that they had sent the troops to Holmby. Charles told them he would believe that when they hanged Joyce and not before. He was doing Fairfax an injustice, for Fairfax was a good soldier but no politician. It was Cromwell who was lying.

<sup>1</sup> There is a contemporary portrait of him, pistol and all, attributed to Vandyke's pupil, Dobson.

It was hardly possible for Cromwell to tell the truth, for he had to keep a foot in both camp and Parliament, and the Commons were outraged at the King's abduction. They ordered Charles's return to Holmby, but they were powerless to coerce the Army, and Charles refused to return. He was about to see whether he could not make Cromwell and the Army serve his turn.

The unnatural alliance depended mainly upon Charles's power to deceive Cromwell. He was curiously successful for a time. While the Army threatened Parliament, expelled its obnoxious members and occupied London with troops, Charles moved about with the officers from Newmarket to Hatfield, to Windsor, Caversham, and Hampton Court. Cromwell complained indeed that the King might be "more frank" and wished he was not tied "so strictly to narrow maxims." But he assured a friend that Charles "was the uprightest and most conscientious man of his three kingdoms."

Charles was better treated than by Scots or Parliamentary guardians, he was allowed to see his friends and even his chaplains. From Caversham, Cromwell rode with him to Maidenhead where Charles saw his younger children again (Prince Charles was in France with his mother). There was no deception in the King's love for them, and Cromwell actually wept at the scene of reunion.

The upshot was that the Army, silencing Parliament by military force, offered Charles far better terms than any he had yet seen. The scheme, drawn up by Cromwell's son-in-law, Ireton, was called the *Heads of the Proposals*. It was exceedingly generous, startling in its originality, perhaps ahead of its age. It allowed Episcopacy, though without political rights or power to coerce: it insisted on a new and more democratic franchise that would have made Parliament more representative of the nation. It is easy to see why Charles rejected the scheme. It is impossible not to blame him for refusing to discuss it in a more sympathetic spirit.

No doubt he distrusted the sincerity of Cromwell and Ireton ; certainly, when they had fuller powers, they did not put their democratic ideas into practice. But the settlement was worth an honest trial. Charles hardly thought of it as a settlement at all, but only as a sign that the Army was begging his favour : he hoped that he would soon be able to dictate terms to them. " You cannot do without me," he told the officers ; " you will fall to ruin if I do not sustain you." One of his servants was astonished at the King's confidence. " Sir," he said, " Your Majesty speaks as if you had some secret power that I do not know of."

Such a secret power Charles believed himself to possess. He was sure of regaining his throne, and preferred to do so with the help of Royalists rather than of a pack of rebels. Argyle had offered him an army in return for a promise to make England Presbyterian. He had returned an uncompromising refusal. Now Argyle was losing ground in Edinburgh, Hamilton was gaining. Hamilton was persuading the Scots to accept the King's suggestion of three years' Presbyterianism, and then a new settlement. He was in touch with the discontented Royalists in England. The northern gentlemen were ready to rise, the home counties, hitherto loyal to the Roundheads, were growing tired of Parliamentary tyranny and military dictation. Lady Carlisle, a Royalist again, was spinning webs of intrigue in London. Henrietta was as prodigal as ever with hopes of continental assistance.

It is said that Cromwell discovered what was going on in a curious way. He was still waiting for the King's support. Rumour had it he was to be made Earl of Essex and gain great place in a restored monarchy : one Roundhead was saying that if Cromwell stepped into Buckingham's shoes, he himself would be a second Felton. Then a message came to Cromwell at Windsor, to warn him that he was building on shifting sands ; the proof of it was a letter hidden, unknown to its bearer, in the saddle-

cloth of a messenger who was due to leave for the Continent that day. Cromwell and Ireton disguised themselves as troopers and hurried off to the Blue Boar Inn : they got a man to watch the inn yard and " sat drinking cans of beer till ten of the clock." When the messenger rode up, they ran out with drawn swords, carried off his saddle and, ripping it up, discovered a letter from the King to Henrietta. The saddle was returned, the messenger proceeded to Dover ; Cromwell and Ireton sat in the tap-room of the Blue Boar and read how the King was deciding to trust the Scots rather than the Army.

The picturesque details may or may not be true : the fact is beyond doubt : Cromwell suddenly ceased to trust Charles. Cromwell may have aimed solely at the welfare of England, he may have been moved by personal ambition : probably both motives were at work in his mind. In any case the King had become an obstacle to his schemes. Cromwell sent Charles a letter warning him of danger : the soldiers, he said, were so angry at the King's refusal to accept their terms on the spot, that they were planning to seize and murder him at Hampton Court. Charles was already thinking that he had better play his dangerous game from some place farther from London ; Cromwell's warning letter may have hastened his departure. Escape from Hampton Court was easy ; the guard was under the command of Colonel Whalley, a first cousin of Cromwell's, and there is little doubt that Cromwell was glad to see the King get away. One night Charles retired early to his bedroom, ostensibly to write letters before going to sleep ; next morning they found that he had disappeared.

He had reached Titchfield, in Hampshire, seeking some safe refuge. Ashburnham, who rode with him, suggested the Isle of Wight : Hammond, Governor of Carisbrooke Castle, was a cousin of the King's chaplain. Charles objected that he was also Cromwell's cousin. He refused to go until Ashburnham had sounded Hammond and obtained from him an oath that he would not prove another

gaoler. Hammond was in Parliament's service, and could give no such oath : with incredible folly (treacherously, as some said) Ashburnham nevertheless told Hammond where the King was, and brought him across to Titchfield. Charles was appalled at this disobedience and folly. " Oh, Jack," he said, " thou hast undone me ! " But when Ashburnham offered to retrieve his mistake by going downstairs and killing Hammond, Charles refused to let murder be done.

There was nothing for it but to trust Hammond and hope for the best ; that night the party left for Carisbrooke. The King had escaped from one prison to another.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile the war clouds were scudding up. The Northern gentry rose, seizing Berwick and Carlisle. The Welsh Royalists were on the move. The troops occupying London had to shoot at a mob that occupied Westminster, crying, " For God and King Charles ! " Kent and Essex were up in arms. Part of the Fleet mutinied and helped the Royalists to seize Deal and Sandown. Hamilton, bitterly opposed by the Scottish clergy and the veterans of Marston Moor, was nevertheless gathering a large army to invade England. King Charles's friends were laying plans to help him escape from Carisbrooke.

<sup>1</sup> The curious combination of suspicious circumstances gave rise to the story that Cromwell had engineered the whole business. It is enshrined in the Ode addressed to him by his friend and admirer, Marvell :

" Twining subtle fears with hope,  
He wove a net of such a scope  
That Charles himself might chase  
To Carisbrooke's narrow case ;  
That thence the royal actor borne  
The tragic scaffold might adorn."

The story is only acceptable on the supposition that Ashburnham was in Cromwell's pay. Ashburnham's enemies point out that he was given curiously easy terms when he came to " compound " for his estate with the Commonwealth. Charles was positive that he was a fool, but no traitor.



The second Civil War lasted barely four months. The alliance between Presbyterian Scots and English Cavaliers was hardly a happy one, and their mutual endeavours were hopelessly mistimed. Before Hamilton crossed the Border, Cromwell had already broken the back of insurrection in Wales, while Fairfax cleared the Royalists of Kent and Essex into Colchester and shut them up in a siege. Cromwell marched north to find Hamilton's troops straggling along many miles of Lancashire roads, cut them in two at the battle of Preston, and destroyed them piecemeal.

Charles's attempts to escape from Carisbrooke were as fruitless as Hamilton's generalship. The first was balked by an iron bar across his window: Harry Firebrace, who was managing the business, wished to saw it through; Charles thought that to do so was to give the plot away at the start, and having tried with his head, he was confident he could squeeze his whole body through, in spite of the bar. Night came; Firebrace arranged for horses outside the walls, and waited below the King's window to conduct him to them. He heard the King scuffling and groaning above him while he waited on tenterhooks below. Then suddenly the sounds ceased: a lighted candle appeared in the window: it was the signal that all had failed. Charles had miscalculated the size of the window, just as he had miscalculated the political forces that were bringing him from throne to scaffold.

It was proclaimed High Treason to help the King escape, and a man was put to death for attempting it. Every scheme was betrayed to Hammond by some treacherous accomplice: one, it was said, was a mere trap concocted by Hammond's lieutenant, Rolph, who waited in the dark to shoot Charles if he took advantage of the arrangements.

Meanwhile Parliament had grown tired of Cromwell and the army, and had even refused to declare itself against the Scots whom he had hurried off to fight. While he was away, it hoped to conclude an agreement with the King.

Still refusing to let him come to London, it arranged for a proper discussion of terms at Newport, a few miles from Carisbrooke. Charles was released on parole, and allowed his secretaries and advisers to assist him. Parliament's commissioners were surprised at his skill in argument, and Lord Salisbury remarked how much the King had improved. "No," answered a secretary, "he was always so, but your Lordship has too late discovered it."

The terms were high: Parliament demanded an acknowledgment that Charles alone had been the aggressor in the first Civil War, while they had acted in self-defence; bishops and Prayer Book must give way to a rigid Presbyterianism; every one, from the King downwards, must sign the Covenant. Charles would go no further than his original offer of a provisional Presbyterianism for three years; he refused to authorize the selling up of the bishops' lands. He doubted whether he was not betraying his trust by conceding large restrictions upon the political power of the Crown. But while the discussions proceeded, Fairfax captured Colchester; Cromwell occupied Edinburgh and made a bargain with Argyle to keep the Scots quiet. The Army turned southward from the war.

Colonel Cooke, one of the King's attendants, at Newport, noticed that new troops were landing on the island. Late one night he begged leave to go out and see what was afoot. Everywhere he stumbled on soldiers. Cooke soon learnt that the Army had resolved to seize the King once more: they did not wish to treat with him or to let Parliament do so; they had come back from the war determined to do him to death. Returning to the King's lodging, Cooke begged him to fly: a guard had been set in the meantime, but Cooke had the password. Charles did not believe that Cooke could get him free: he was sure the attempt would anger all parties: he was under parole to Parliament. Cooke argued that Parliament was now helpless and the parole of no force. But the King refused to move. Cooke urged once more the greatness of the

danger. "Never let that trouble you," said the King; "I would not break my word to prevent it."<sup>1</sup>

Of the danger there was no doubt. Charles was roused at daybreak, hustled into a coach, and driven to the western end of the island. Beside him rode Rolph, abusing the King as they went. Hammond, too scrupulous for the Army's purpose, had been summoned to Headquarters and put under military arrest. When the coach reached the seashore a boat was waiting to convey the King across to Hurst Castle, a desolate little fortress built on a rock among the waves. Here stood a new gaoler, Captain Eyre, a melodramatic figure, bushily bearded, armed with halberd and basket-hilted sword. One of the officers told him to stop swaggering and treat the King with respect. Eyre collapsed into obsequiousness, but it was a poor lodging he had to offer: it was December, and the rooms so dark that candles were needed at midday: the air was dark and unhealthy; the King's only diversion was to walk out to the litter of sharp stones, that served for paths, and watch the ships passing up and down the Solent. Two faithful servants remained with him, Herbert and Harrington, but when the latter began to speak approvingly of the King's arguments at Newport, he was dismissed by the officers. It was a dangerous matter to discuss at all, for Parliament had just voted the King's concessions an adequate basis for a settlement, and the Army had resolved that there must be no settlement which left King Charles alive.

There had long been talk of killing him, especially among the wilder spirits in the military committees. The Second Civil War had given an edge to their words, and they were beginning to affect responsible men. There seemed no other way to prevent the King and Parliament

<sup>1</sup> The King had been entertaining the idea of escape during the negotiations, perhaps of an immediate escape and breach of parole. If the evidence was more conclusive, and not contradicted by the conversation here described (Col. Cooke's *Narrative*), the charge of duplicity against Charles would be proven.

coming to an agreement which would leave the Army in the cold. The Army chaplain, Peters, anticipating his enemies' blasphemies that were later to make comparison between Charles's sufferings and our Lord's, compared the King to Barabbas, the red-coats to Christ, and demanded, since one must be destroyed, that it should not be the latter. He marched with Colonel Pride to the House of Commons and helped to point out the members who were certain to favour an agreement with King Charles: two hundred were refused admission to the House, forty more were arrested for protesting and hindering the "Purge." Still the House fought against the King's trial, trying to strike a last bargain: even the officers were divided in Council, Fairfax refusing to entertain the proposal, Ireton slowly convinced, Cromwell (though the Royalists represented his reluctance as hypocrisy) probably the last of all. A month after Pride's Purge the last pressure was applied to Parliament: a bare forty-six members assembled to vote on a proposal for erecting the Court to try Charles: it was passed by a majority of six, but even the shadow of legality was destroyed when the remnant of the Peers threw out the Bill.

Meanwhile the soldiers had brought Charles from Hurst to Winchester, from Winchester to Windsor. He was still greeted with acclamations on the road and prayers for his preservation. A last plot to rescue him at a lonely spot near Bagshot was foiled by the lameness of a horse. He was still patient and cheerful, rallied Herbert for not waking him early in the morning, and sent out to the Windsor shops to buy him an "alarm-watch." But he had barely a month to live.

At Windsor he had a momentary view of Hamilton, a prisoner, and marked to die within a few days of the King. It was his last glimpse of the old world in which he had once lived in ease and happiness. It had passed away beyond hope of revival.

Buckingham had been twenty years in the grave, and

with him some part of Charles's heart. Of the men who had ridden with them to Madrid, Dick Graeme and Cottington were in exile, Endymion Porter was busy saving his estate by proving to Parliament that, though he held the King's commission, he had never actually been in arms against the Roundheads. The bride they had ridden to seek had died, after fifteen years of marriage to her Austrian cousin, the Emperor—too soon to see her husband's dominions find peace, after the long agony of the Thirty Years' War. It was four years since war had parted Charles from Henrietta; she was growing a narrower Papist, would one day disregard his last instructions for his children's religion, and even turn her son from the door because he refused to abandon his Protestantism. Lucy Carlisle, once queen of the world of elegance, was a fast prisoner in the Tower, shuddering at the rack that was shown her in hope of frightening from her the secrets of her tortuous intrigues. Vandyke was dead: his and the other pictures that Charles had so lovingly gathered were soon to be sold and dispersed, Parliament at first ordering that all representations of Christ and the Virgin must be burnt: King Philip and Mazarin sent agents to the sale. Laud was dead; the clergy that had held fast to his principles were driven from their livings, some to penury, a few to death: the most horrible fate had overtaken Dr. Hudson, who had ridden with Charles from Oxford. Surrendering with the garrison of Woodcroft House, he had been attacked by the victorious Roundheads; as he attempted to climb down the walls, they had cut off his hands and then clubbed him to death in the moat below. Everywhere the churches were being battered and defaced; the royal chapel at Windsor was a plundered wilderness. Little Gidding was deserted; Basing House had been razed. The whole kingdom was a grave for loyal gentlemen; the last and most gallant was Lisle, executed under Colchester walls, calling out to the firing-party to come nearer or they

would miss him as they had so often missed him in battle.

Such deaths were not on his conscience ; there was no ghost to haunt him, except Strafford's ; but for that one sin, he had done his duty as he saw it, however narrow and imperfect his vision. There was one more task before him. Two years ago he had written to Digby : " I desire you to assure all my friends that if I cannot live as a king, I shall die like a gentleman, without doing anything which may make honest men blush for me." He had often been charged with breaking his promises - this one he was going to keep.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### THE SCAFFOLD

*January 1649*

It is difficult to overthrow a monarchy by revolution without ending, sooner or later, with the killing of a king. Sometimes it is done in mere defiance, sometimes to prevent reaction. The revolutionaries may take their victim to a cellar and shoot him without formality, and that is perhaps the honestest way. They may erect a tribunal to try him, and invent some new law against which he is supposed to have offended. For it is generally the misfortune of revolutionaries to find that their king has done nothing that can be cited in a law court as a capital offence. Two charges were brought against Charles. The first, that he had deliberately engineered the first Civil War in order to win for himself an "unlimited and tyrannical power," will not bear a moment's inspection. The second, that he had corrupted Parliament's allies and servants into renewing the war, has a little more force. Yet it is difficult to blame a king for attempting to recover by force what force has taken away. No one can doubt that he believed that a Royalist victory in the second Civil War was the only chance of a just and lasting settlement. And by killing him, his enemies were provoking yet a third war, even more destructive.

These considerations would bear less weight if the Regicides could have made good their boast that they were acting in the name of the people. If there is anything certain about England in these dark days, it is that the vast majority of the people were appalled at what the Army was doing. Even Parliament, to whose authority

the Regicides hypocritically appealed, refused its sanction, though Parliament might be imagined to contain the King's bitterest enemies. His partisans had left the Commons seven years ago, and their seats were bestowed on Roundheads. This packed House had to be reduced from 500 to 46 by military pressure before it would consent to the trial of the King, and then it passed the Bill by a majority of six ; and when the remnant of Roundhead Lords threw it out, their action had to be ignored. The ordinary judges naturally refused to touch the business. Of the 135 Commissioners specially appointed to form the tribunal, barely half could be got to take their seats, and only 59 to sign the death-warrant. The execution is difficult to justify on any system of morality. It certainly had no sanction of law or popular consent. It left its perpetrators with no alternative but ten years of military despotism, and discredited every political and religious principle that they had once fought for.

It has been defended on grounds of political necessity. The defence is valid to those who think it necessary for the Army to impose its will on England and for Cromwell to rise to supreme power. It has some force with those who believe Charles to have been an utterly faithless man, incapable of abiding by any settlement to which he gave assent and quick to find conscientious reasons for breaking his word. It is not possible to accept such a view of the King. His methods of treating for a settlement had been exasperating and deceitful ; but they had been those of a desperate man fighting against attempts to make him sign some agreement he could not in honour observe. If he had been the slippery politician that he is sometimes represented, he could have taken any one of the dozen chances that had lately offered and signed an agreement (as, for instance, Henrietta had urged him to do) only to repudiate it by force or fraud. There are signs that, by refusing to do so, by delay and argument and prevarication, he had arrived in sight of a settlement with Parliament.



that he could honourably accept. But it was one that left Cromwell and the Army unsatisfied, and it was hardly remarkable that men accused Cromwell of killing the King in order to prevent it.

Pride's Purge and the military occupation of London had reduced Parliament to a handful of partisans willing to vote what the Army required. But the officers still hesitated to order what England abhorred as a crime. They laid a last temptation before Charles, offering to ensure his acquittal if he would accept their terms; the most important were that he should authorize the sale of the bishops' lands and resign the royal power of vetoing what the Commons voted. The first, as Charles saw it, was to legalize robbery and cripple the only form of Church that had any authority or chance of permanence in England. The second was to destroy the monarchy he had been born to preserve and to destroy it in favour of a small group of evil men acting under the dictation of the sword. It is just possible that another man might have saved his life by accepting such a humiliation, in order to reverse it as soon as circumstances permitted. It is inconceivable that Charles should have done so.

He had never been afraid of death, and it was coming to him in a form more welcome than any. The issues were clear at last: he was dying to save the Church from Puritanism, the monarchy from rebels; and his death, whether he knew it or not, was to be the best blow he had ever struck for his Cause. There was no chance now for miscalculations and hesitations, for twistings and turnings and delay. Men noticed at the trial that even his lifelong stammer left him, so that he spoke firmly and clearly. Strongest of all was the feeling that everything his enemies did was a further justification of his life's work. He had always foreseen that, whatever reverence for law they had pretended, the end of their politics (and his forced concessions to them) was injustice and anarchy. There was only one thing on his conscience, and he acknowledged

that if it increased his accusers' guilt, it justified his own punishment. He was dying because he had consented to Strafford's death.

His old enemies were refusing to countenance this last result of rebellion. Fairfax, still nominal commander of the army, would have no hand in what Cromwell was determined to do. Manchester and Northumberland opposed the ordinance for the King's trial: Prynne had been excluded by Pride's Purge before it could be passed. The Army had driven Holles and Clotworthy into exile. Vane, the avowed Republican, was still in the House but voted against the business. St. John would have nothing to do with it. Saye was doing a characteristic thing: looking round for a safe refuge, he jockeyed the owner out of the Isle of Lundy and retired there to await the Restoration; then he returned to accept high office under Charles II and carve up at Broughton, where he had once plotted with Pym and Hampden, the bland motto, "It is pleasanter not to remember the past."

There is hardly one of the old names to stand beside Cromwell's on the list of judges. There were a few officers who had won distinction in the war, Ireton and Ludlow, Okey and Fleetwood. There was the old reprobate, Henry Marten (Charles had once refused to attend a race-meeting if "that whoremonger" was to be present), and Mauleverer, whom Parliament had arraigned for horse-stealing. Of the other names, hardly one had achieved either fame or notoriety; some were gentlemen, some tradesmen, a few workmen.

They must be granted great courage, and probably conviction. They were braving the terrible death that overtook fifteen of them at the Restoration, while the rest went into prison or exile. If the King's trial disgusted the moderate men, it also weeded out cowards from among the extremists. One has for his memorial an imperishable phrase which he flung at the Restoration judges; when custom prescribed the summoning of a long string of

unnecessary witnesses to prove the guilt of the Regicides, he protested against the arid formality. "This thing," he said, "was not done in a corner."

The King was brought from Windsor to St. James's; orders were given that he should not be treated as a king, but as a prisoner. Meanwhile they were clearing Westminster Hall of the booths and stalls that had sprung up in it, bundling out old Mrs. Breach the pamphlet-seller and Samuel Pecke the scrivener. The hall was divided across the centre by two wooden fences; the narrow lane between was partitioned off into three boxes, and in the centre one was placed a chair for the King. It faced a table on which lay the mace and sword of state; beyond, a dais was erected across the end of the hall to accommodate the sixty or seventy judges who had consented to sit. In the back half of the hall stood the soldiers, and, later in the trial, a number of spectators. Other spectators thronged the galleries that ran down the side walls. The scene was set.

At two o'clock on Saturday, January 20, the judges were meeting for a last consultation in the Painted Chamber, while Charles was brought in sedan chair from St. James's to Whitehall, and thence by barge to Westminster. Cromwell, standing at the window, saw him land in the gardens of Cotton House; he turned to ask his colleagues what was to be the crucial question of the trial. How should they answer the King if he demanded by what authority they were trying him? Marten suggested that they must claim the authority of Parliament and of "all the good people of England." With that resolution they marched across to Westminster Hall and took their seats on the dais.

An obscure lawyer called Bradshawe had been found to preside, and he discharged his difficult task with considerable ability. The first formality was the reading of the Commons' ordinance for setting up the Court. Then to hold a roll-call of the judges. Half the names were unanswered, and when Fairfax's was read out a

voice from the gallery cried, "He has too much wit to be here!" Then a party of soldiers was sent to fetch the prisoner from Cotton House. He appeared, dressed in black, wearing his George and Garter. He sat down in the little box, carefully avoiding any sign of deference to the judges. Bradshawe addressed him, accusing him, in the name of the Commons, of all the innocent blood that had lately been spilt in England. He ordered the indictment to be read; it had been composed by a Dutchman called Isaac Dorislaus who was soon to return, unwisely, to his native land and be murdered by Royalist exiles at The Hague. It was drawn up in the name of the English people, and it fixed the charge at High Treason. Charles, after attempting to speak once, sat laughing to himself. Then Bradshawe required him to answer to the charge.

There was only one answer he could make. He could not plead at all until he knew by what authority he was on trial—"I mean," he said, "lawful authority—for there are many unlawful authorities in the world, robbers by the highway." He had been in negotiation with the Houses of Parliament; they were "upon the conclusion of a treaty." He had suddenly been carried away and "brought from place to place, like I know not what, until I came hither." He demanded to know under what law this had come about, before he spoke further. "Remember, I am your King, your lawful King, and what sin you bring upon your heads—besides those other judgments you bring upon the land. . . . I have a trust committed to me by God, by old and lawful descent. I will not betray that trust to a new, unlawful authority, for all the world. Therefore, let me know by what lawful authority I am come hither and you shall hear more of me. Resolve me in that and I will answer."

The deadlock was complete. Bradshawe did not help matters by suggesting that Charles was being tried by "the People of England, by which people you were elected King." Charles scored a debating point by replying

Tuesday's session was shorter, Charles still demanding his right to give reasons for denying his judges' authority, Bradshawe refusing to permit it.

On Wednesday and Thursday a private committee of the judges sat to hear "evidence" in the Painted Chamber: a row of witnesses from different parts of the country gave unnecessary testimony that they had seen the King in arms against the Parliamentary forces. It is probable that the delay was welcomed as a means of fortifying the wavering resolution of the judges. There was much to make them waver. They were not popular in London: the Presbyterians were against them and the pulpits thundered denunciation. Bradshawe was given new lodgings in Dean's Yard, where he could be guarded; even so he wore a bullet-proof hat, lined with steel. It was feared that Fairfax might put himself at the head of the discontent, and even make trouble among the soldiers. The Scottish commissioners sent to London by Argyle were protesting violently against the King's trial. A more pathetic appeal came from Prince Charles in Holland—his signature on a blank sheet of paper; the judges were invited to write what terms they liked, so long as they spared his father's life.

Whatever qualms they felt, the judges were induced to close their ranks and carry through what they had begun. On Friday, sixty-three of them met together, agreed on their sentence and resolved to meet next day and summon the King to hear it read.

As soon as he appeared he endeavoured to speak, but Bradshawe, arrayed now in a scarlet robe, silenced him for the moment. But as Bradshawe began to speak and had pronounced the words "in the name of the people of England," the same woman's voice that had cavilled at Fairfax's name on the first day was heard from the gallery. It was Lady Fairfax. "It is a lie!" she cried, "where are the people or their consents!" Another woman called out "Not half or a quarter of them. Cromwell is

a traitor!" Colonel Axtell commanded the soldiers in the body of the hall to present their muskets and to shoot if the drabs tried to speak again. When Bradshawe resumed it was to say that the prisoner would be allowed to speak before sentence was pronounced, but that the Court could not entertain any more objections against its authority or against the right of the House of Commons to establish it.

Charles used his opportunity to make a last request; he asked to be confronted with Parliament itself, Lords and Commons together. At this one of the judges, Downes, rose in his place, trying to speak in favour of the King's request. His neighbours told him to sit down again and be quiet, but he demanded an adjournment. It was granted, but to no purpose: he could find no colleague to support him in urging that Parliament must at least be informed of the King's request.

The judges returned, and Bradshawe pronounced against the King's plea, quoting Magna Charta, with hypocritical irony, to the effect that justice must not be delayed to any man. Delay would be very dangerous to the judges; to reopen discussion in Parliament was impossible, for the army had virtually destroyed Parliament before it could get its way. Charles may not have known about Pride's Purge, but he must have guessed from Bradshawe's prevarications that the Lords had refused to vote for his trial. The Court could not grant his appeal without destroying its own existence.

"Sir," he replied to Bradshawe, "I know it is vain for me to dispute. I am no sceptic to deny the power that you have. I know that you have power enough. Sir, I confess I think it would be for the kingdom's peace if you would have taken pains to have shown the lawfulness of your power." He made a last appeal to Parliament. "I do require you, as you will answer it at the dreadful day of judgment, that you consider it once again." Beyond that he had no more to say, only asking that his words

be recorded. He could only await what was inevitable, "an ugly sentence which I believe will pass upon me."

Bradshawe prefaced it with a long lecture on the lawfulness of calling kings to account, and the evils of Charles's reign. He was full of pedantries, he contrived to obscure the fact that it was not Parliament which was condemning the King, and he relied overmuch upon vague denunciations of him as a "traitor and murtherer." Nevertheless the speech is an able and sincere performance, far more so than the statement (prepared but never delivered) of the prosecuting counsel, who had raked up venomous old scandals—the poisoning of King James, a deliberate plot to betray La Rochelle to the Papists, the incitement to murder Protestants in Ireland. Bradshawe deserves better consideration than Lawyer Cooke, who had waited in vain for Charles to plead and give him an opportunity of prosecuting. Bradshawe's speech, his references to the King's "breach of trust," his "miscarriages," the sad state of his country, aiming against Charles's mistakes rather than his sins, would be an easy one to answer in a court of law. But it proclaims the man's conviction that, if the thing he was doing was unjust, it was also necessary.

Charles attempted to interrupt once, asking leave to reply to Bradshawe's "imputations" before sentence was pronounced. Bradshawe quashed him, drove straight ahead to his peroration, and commanded the clerk to read the formal sentence of death. Again Charles asked leave to reply. Bradshawe refused it, and ordered the guards to remove the prisoner. As they did so, Charles repeated his appeal, a little feverishly now. "Guard, withdraw your prisoner!" thundered Bradshawe. "I am not suffered to speak," said the King, as he was led away. "Expect what justice other people will have."

Axtell was scoffing aloud as he went, the soldiers laughing and blowing smoke in his face. One had spat in his face on the second day of the trial. Now several were calling out "Justice! Execution!" "Poor creatures,"

said the King, "for sixpence they would say as much of their commanders." One indeed cried, "God bless you, sir!" so that his officer hit him with a cane, and the King told him that the punishment exceeded the offence. He was hurried into a sedan chair, and the porters took off their hats to him until Axtell beat them into covering their heads again. At the door of St. James's he met his personal servants whom the soldiers were sending away; seeing them weep, the King told his captors that they might forbid their attendance but not their tears. He sent away his dogs, asking that they might be taken over to Henrietta.

Of his children, only two were at hand. Mary was with her husband in Holland; James had escaped, disguised as a woman, to join Prince Charles abroad. Elizabeth, thirteen years of age, and the little Duke of Gloucester, three years younger, were brought to St. James's on the Monday night. She was to die in prison before the next year was out, he had another ten years to live. Both were weeping now, though Charles told them that they must not sorrow overmuch, because he was dying gloriously for law, liberty, and true Protestantism. He charged the girl with a last message to Henrietta, quaintly but characteristically recommended her to read certain books of theology, and told her to forgive his murderers but not to trust their word. He warned the little Prince that they might try to make him King for their own ends, but that he must not consent while his elder brothers lived. "I will sooner be torn in pieces!" said the boy. Charles divided some jewels between them, kissed them, and said good-bye. He spent the evening with Bishop Juxon. It was a happy chance, for Juxon had been one of the only two to bid him refuse consent to Strafford's death. That he had done so and yet retained the respect and even affection of the Puritans is the best of testimonies to his saintly character. With Juxon's blessing and absolution Charles slept his last sleep on earth.

Meanwhile it had been no easy matter to get sufficient



signatures to the death-warrant. The first document was wrongly dated and addressed to two officers who refused to take a hand in the business; those who had signed it might draw back and refuse to put their hand to an amended order. It was safer to change the two names and the date by erasure and substitution. Not for the first time King Charles's enemies resorted to forgers' methods.

Even so, the list of signatures was a meagre one, and great efforts were made to increase it. When the Restoration came, the captured Regicides were prodigal of stories about the pressure and intimidation under which they acted, especially about Cromwell's brutal insistence. There is little doubt that part of their tale is true. By one means or another, fifty-nine judges, not quite half the original number, were induced to sign the death-warrant.

Tuesday, the 30th of January, dawned raw and bitter. The Thames was frozen, and a light snow was sprinkling down; next day it would fall in earnest, enough to make a pall upon the White King's coffin as the little band of devoted Royalists carried him to rest in the plundered chapel at Windsor.

Charles rose early. He had asked Herbert to bring in his pallet-bed and sleep beside him. Herbert told the King he had a strange dream of Laud knocking for admission and conferring with his master. Charles asked Herbert to give him two shirts to wear, lest men should see him shiver with cold and imagine he was afraid. Then Herbert gave place to Juxon, who was alone with the King for an hour. Finally the three of them said the Prayer Book service together. A little before ten Colonel Hacker knocked at the door. The King stepped out into the air. "March apace!" he called out to the soldiers, for it was very cold. Rogue, his spaniel, attempted to follow him on his last journey, but was taken up by a bystander. As the party passed Spring Gardens, Charles pointed out one of the trees and told Juxon that his brother

Henry had planted it thirty years ago. The wheel of his life had come full circle.

At Whitehall, the King received the Sacrament. Even to the last the Puritan preachers tried to force their attentions on him, but he made Juxon tell them to pray for him as they had often prayed against him, but he would have them do it elsewhere. He refused dinner, but took a piece of bread and a glass of claret. He had many long hours to wait; no one knows the reason for delay, perhaps there was a difficulty in finding an executioner, perhaps the remnant of Parliament had to meet and pass an order forbidding any one to proclaim King Charles's successor after the ancient custom. The winter afternoon was half spent before the summons came.

The scene that followed is worth trying to envisage: even its details were not without their effect upon our history.

A man, let us suppose, has come out from London to see the end. He walks along the Strand, passing the fronts of the great men's houses, whose gardens run down to the river behind. As he is about to swing left towards Whitehall, he sees the ruined stump of Charing Cross, demolished two years since because Parliament had voted it a monument of superstition. Beyond it are a few houses, then Spring Gardens, and the open country. The landmarks are Goring House (where now stands Buckingham Palace), the villages of Knight's Bridge and Paddington. Nearer in is the isolated mass of St. James's where the King slept last night. To the right, probably visible over the roofs of the nearer homes, is Windmill Hill and Pickadilly Hall where, a few years ago, "was a fair House for Entertainment and Gaming, with Handsome walks with Shade, and where were an upper and lower Bowling Green, whither very many of the Nobility and Gentry of the best Quality resorted, both for exercise and Pleasure."<sup>1</sup> Now the City is beset with a Puritan Army.

<sup>1</sup> *Clarendon Rebellion*, i. 241.

there is little gaming for the Nobility and Gentry. The spectator leaves the ruins of Charing Cross and turns down to Whitehall.

He is at the head of a kind of square, enclosed on three sides. To his right, where now the Horse Guards stand, is the Palace Tilting Yard. Ahead of him, instead of the straight broad street of Whitehall, the view is blocked by buildings of Henry VIII's time, straddled across the way; only Holbein's turreted gate gives a glimpse into the Privy Garden and the right-of-way that leads through it to Westminster. To his left, the third side of the square is formed by the Banqueting Hall, the only part of Inigo's rebuilding scheme which there had been money to complete. From its north end, nearest the spectator, a little red-brick wing or addition has grown out. The scaffold has been built in an L-shape, its long arm running down the left side of the square under the main windows of the Banqueting Hall; its shorter arm turns the corner and connects up to the red-brick wing, whose first-story window has had its sill broken down until it is a door whereby King Charles can step on to the scaffold.

The whole square is crowded with people, grown stiff and cold with waiting. They fill every window, and swarm on roofs and chimneys. Soldiers stand in line to keep them well back from the scaffold. A troop of cavalry is drawn up under Holbein's gate, another blocks the opposite end of the square, near the stub of Charing Cross. The snow has ceased, and the sun struggles through.

There is a stir at the broken window, and a small party appears on the scaffold—two or three officers, two executioners, masked and disguised, the King, and Bishop Juxon. They advance, turn the corner of the Banqueting Hall, and halt beneath its fourth great window. They are only visible to the waist, for the railing of the scaffold has been hung with black cloth; the low block, the plain deal coffin, are completely hidden from the crowd below. Charles has a small paper in his hand, notes of a speech he

had intended to make to the people ; but the soldiers have kept them so far back that his voice will hardly reach them ; he was never a good speaker. He turns to the group on the scaffold, to the few soldiers within earshot. Some one tried to take down his words in shorthand, but " it is done so defectively it deserveth not to be accounted his speech, by the testimony of those that heard it." <sup>1</sup> He spoke of the illegality of his execution, of the destruction of Parliament, and the pressure put upon its remnant ; his judges were " out of the way which he would gladly put them into ; out of the way, because the Kingdom consisted of three Estates, King, Lords, and Commons, and they were devolved into one, and that but a piece of one, and that under a power." He suggested three remedies. The national synod he had proposed at Newcastle and Newport to settle religion. " For the King, that a lawful succession may be, by authority of Parliament ; for the People, that a free election of members be, to represent them in Parliament." Urged by Juxon, he declared that he died a firm Protestant. Nothing, he said, " lay so heavy on his conscience as his consenting to the death of the Earle of Strafford." Then he gave his stick and cloak, his jewels and watch to the Bishop, directing him to send them to his family and friends. Seeing a man stand near the Axe, he said, half-humorously, " Do not hurt the Axe, though it may me." They had driven staples

<sup>1</sup> Fuller's *Church History*, 1655. All the details of the scene (especially the position of window and scaffold) are hotly debated. Far more important are Charles's last speeches. Two accounts appeared within a day or two of the execution. I have followed Dillingham's in the *London Intelligencer*, except for the words about an " incorruptible crown," which come from the second pamphlet, by Peter Cole. Parliamentarians will prefer the latter : though it agrees in making the King speak of Strafford and of the National Synod, it omits the passages about Parliament acting under pressure and about " free election," and makes the King die an unrepentant absolutist, saying that government is " nothing pertaining " to the People, " a subject and a sovereign are clean different things." The pamphlet is " published by special authority."

into the flooring of the scaffold and brought cords to pull him down if he resisted. They had misjudged their man. He assured the Bishop that he was light of heart. "I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown," he said, "where no disturbance can be, no disturbance in the world." He told the executioner he wished to pray for a moment, and would then give him a sign to strike. He knelt down.

He was invisible to the waiting crowd. There was a pause and a silence. Then they saw the headsman move, the axe rise and fall. "The blow I saw given," says an onlooker, "and can truly say, with a sad heart. At the instant whereof, I remember well, there was such a groan by the thousands there present as I never heard before, and desire I may never hear again."

Then the two troops of cavalry set spur to their horses and rode forward to clear the square, jostling aside the people of England in whose name murder had been committed in Whitehall.

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## APPENDIX

A FEW days after the King's death, a small book called *Eikon Basilike* was published in London, purporting to be the meditations of King Charles upon the political events of his later years. The reasons for accepting it as genuine are practically flawless: the arguments for its spuriousness are equally convincing. No satisfactory solution has been found to this highly complicated problem. I believe a few passages to be the King's writing, or an uncannily accurate reproduction of his thought: the passage on Strafford's death (with its repetition, from his genuine letter, April 23, 1641, of the rather odd word "conjuncture") seems to me most likely to be genuine. Otherwise I have ignored the book.

A good selection of his letters will be found in Halliwell's *Letters of the Kings of England*. The originals shown in the British Museum give a very interesting demonstration of how handwriting can change. For his speeches, proclamations, etc., I have used May's *Parliamentary History* and *Bibliotheca Regia*, published in 1658. His religious controversy with Henderson is reprinted in Aiton's *Life and Times of Alexander Henderson*.

Other original authorities are far too numerous to quote, and quotation without a full discussion of their reliability (which would run to several hundred pages) is quite useless. The only unimpeachable source is the *Calendar of State Papers*. Clarendon gives the most interesting account, from the point of view of an Opposition member converted after Strafford's death to a moderate Royalism. The best written ultra-Royalist history is Echard's, 1707, quite unreliable in detail. The most powerful mind that has tackled the period is Hume's; he is too disgruntled and disillusioned to be a Royalist, but he is a furious anti-Parliamentarian.

Far the most complete and capable study of the period is Gardiner's great history: its footnotes are an excellent guide to authorities. I believe the view taken of Charles's character to be radically mistaken, but there is no question of Gardiner's attempt to be fair. It breaks down in curious ways: I suggest reference to his account of Felton's remorse (vi. 359),\*the words "hardly

mattered" on p. 456, vol. viii. (compare what Charles said of the business in *Cal. S.P. Dom.* cccxxiii. 14.6.39), the curious account of Pym's motives in vol. ix. chap. xcvi. (e.g. p. 351, line 15), and finally, the extraordinary conclusions drawn from the second Army Plot (x. 399-400). Consciously or unconsciously, such things colour the whole narrative and affect the reader's mind.

New facts and new points of view have greatly modified our view of the period since Gardiner wrote. The most important will be found in the following books :—Wade, *John Pym*. R. R. Reid, *The King's Council for the North*. Hugh O'Grady, *Strafford*. Penn, *The Navy under the Early Stuarts*. G. Callender, *Naval Side of British History*. G. N. Clark, *The Seventeenth Century*. Muddiman, *Trial of Charles I.* C. S. Terry, *History of Scotland*. M. James, *Social Policy during the Puritan Revolution*. G. R. S. Taylor, *Oliver Cromwell*. E. M. Leonard, *Early History of English Poor Relief*. Chesterton, *Short History of England* (worth a great many more learned books). H. G. R. Reade, *Sidelights on the Thirty Years' War*. H. Belloc, *Richelieu, Cromwell and Warfare in England*. H. F. Russell Smith, *Harrington and his Oceana*.

Two works of reference must be mentioned. I have taken about half of my facts from the *Dictionary of National Biography*. And my work has been enlivened by the excellent map of Seventeenth Century England, published with an interesting introduction by the Ordnance Survey Office.

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